A CONSERVATIVE HINDU OF COLONIAL INDIA:
Raja Radhakanta Deb and his milieu (1784-1867)

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Raja Radhakanta Deb and his milieu (1784-1867)

Syamalendu Sengupta

NAVRANG: NEW DELHI
1990

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Dedicated to the memory of my parents
Sudhir Kumar Sengupta
Priyabala Sengupta

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CONTENTS

		Page
	Acknowledgements	
	Abbreviations	
	Introduction	1
Chapter		
1.	The Shovabazar Raj of Colonial Calcutta	4
2.	Quest of Secular Knowledge by a Conservative Hindu	30
3.	Conservative Hindu Brakes on Anglicised Changes	67
4.	Political Activities of Colonized People	86
5.	Conclusions	121
Appendices		
A.	Genealogical Table of the Shovabazar Raj Family	129
B.	Principal Hindoo Inhabitants of Calcutta	130
C.	An Account of the Agriculture of 24-Pergunnas	134
D.	Native Meeting on Black Act	140
E.	Sati Describeds by a Muhammadan	144
F.	An Orthodox Hindu Attacks Raja Radhakanta for Supporting Women's Education	146
G.	Establishment of Hindu Dharma Rakshaka Sabha in 1855	149
	Bibliography	151
	Index	161

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Abbreviations used

1.	The Editors of the Raja's Sabdakalpadruma, *A Rapid Sketch of the life of Raja Radhakanta Deb Bahadur, the testimonials of his character and learning*	*A Rapid Sketch*
2.	General Committee of Pubiic Instruction	GCPI
3.	Report of the Calcutta School Society (Manuscriipts)	RCSS, MSS.
4.	The First Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedisngs	The First Report
5.	The Second Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedisngs	The Second Report

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INTRODUCTION

Raja Radhakanta Deb of the Shovabazar Raj of colonial Calcutta had has been carrying with him epithets like *conservative* and *orthodox* Hindu since he had always been found opposing reforms in Hindu religion and ritual. Though he himself was proud of being an orthodox Hindu, his liberal contemporaries as well as recent critics found him quixotic in attempting to stall passage of the chariot of change in the Hindu society. In this book, however, there is no frantic effort to absolve him of any pejorative epithets - here Raja Radhakanta is being studied as he was found *in situ*. It begins with the genesis of the Shovabazar Raj in Calcutta and in the process highlights the activities of its founder, Nabakrishna. He, while founding one of the most influential Hindu families of Calcutta, assumed much power of a social authority in Bengal. Nabakrishna derived his authority mainly from his association with the English. His elevation to the status of an authority among his own people was a major historical phenomenon in the 18th century. Nabakrishna by virtue of his holding important offices under the English East India Company became as important a personality as can be ranked along the line next to Reza Khan. The Raja of Benares, the Maratha- Peshwa and the Foujdar of Bhagalpur maintained close relations with him as he was considered to be an amenable liaison between them and the East India Company. His understanding of the utility value of English language was significant. He sent his grandson, Radhakanta to an English school. It was a momentous decision, and almost a break with the traditional *pathsala* education.

Copimohum Deb, adopted son of Nabakrishna, besides being the founder-President of the *Dharma Sabha*, was an enthusiastic promoter of Hindu Science. Creativity, in fact, proved also to be a trait of the character of his son, Radhakanta whose *Sabdakalpadruma* earned him world - wide fame. His creativity was evident in *Nitikatha*, *Bangla Shiksagrantha*, scientific and sociological papers contributed to the Agricultural and Horticultural Society. Radhakanta was an humble composer of *Vaisnava* poems as well. Resume as such of the times from Nabakrishna to Radhakanta, highlighting the colonial political scene, liberal and conservative squabbles as well as debates over reforms, and finally Radhakanta's retirement to Brindaban has been analysed in the First chapter to bring out the context against which the

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conservative Hindu personality of Radhakanta came to be shaped.

In the Second chapter the state of colonial education and Radhakanta's participation in it have been discussed. The age in which Radhakanta lived was an age of useful education which eventually led towards reform of the *pathsalas* and the beginning of female education in Bengal. The Government decided that the English language was to be the medium of Western education. Thus the reform of the *pathsala* education through the vernacular language was abandoned. Radhakanta did not support it; he also criticised the Government for not promoting Sanskrit education. He, however, was associated with the Calcutta School Society and the Calcutta School Book Society to put the traditional elementary education on a stable footing. Radhakanta was a supporter of female education, but would not like to see women of high caste Hindus going to the Bethune's school for education — though we find him informing Bethune his happiness at the opening of his school for female education in Calcutta.

Radhakanta was a part of the changing nineteenth century Hindu society. While he acquiesced in some of the changes, he opposed some due to his belief in the inviolability of traditional Hindu social customs and rituals. As he was an orthodox Hindu, he through the *Dharma Sabha*, the *Samachar- Chandrika,* the *Hindu Intelligencer*, the *Hindu Dharma Rakshaka Sabha* and numerous petitions to the Government opposed the regulation banning the practice of *Sati*, widow-remarriage, the Lex-Loci Act, and radicalism of the Young Bengal. This social involvement of Radhakanta is the subject of the Third chapter. The findings of this chapter show that Radhakanta would like to see changes in the Hindu society 'step by step'. His Hinduism was neither aggressive nor intolerant. He had regards for other religions, but he could not help criticizing proselytization by the Christian missionaries. Radhakanta along with Debendranath Tagore initiated a social movement against forcible conversion of the Hindus by the Christian missionaries. His association with the liberals like Debendranatha and Ramgopal Ghosh was extended to the area of political activities as well.

The fourth chapter is about the political activities of the conservative Hindus like Radhakanta and Ram Kamal Sen, and also of the liberals like Debendranath and Prasanna Kumar Tagore and the radicals led by Ramgopal Ghosh and Krishnamohun Bannerji. The political associations jointly founded by all of them aimed at gaining for the Indians their due share in the Government. They were in fact significant political platforms of a colonized people before the birth of the Indian National Congress. While the Landholders' Society, the first among the earlier political associations,

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fought the British Indian Government on legal points, the British Indian Association adopted petitioning as a political weapon. The singular achievement of the British Indian Association was its success of arousing a unique Indian political awareness among the people. Radhakanta, the President of the Association, reiterated that unity among the people would strengthen their power of fighting for their cause. It may be mentioned that Radhakanta and his friends had an abiding belief in the benevolence of the British administration.

While concluding the present study the observations of the speakers who spoke in the memorial meeting after Radhakanta's death have been analysed. In the memorial meeting Radhakanta's orthodoxy, religious tolerance and goodness were recounted by radicals namely the Reverend Krishnamohun Bannerji and Kishorichand Mitra against whose ideas and activities Radhakanta worked throughout his life. Others like Rajendralal Mitra and the Reverend James Long spoke about his rationality and high intellectual qualities. Radhakanta was associated with Hindu organizations like the *Dharma Sabha* and the *Hindu Dharma Rakshaka Sabha*, but never founded a political association exclusively for the Hindus. He, however, left behind a conservative Hindu tradition which was tolerant towards other religions, and accepting cautiously gradualism in all social reform movements.

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THE SHOVABAZAR RAJ OF COLONIAL CALCUTTA

A. The Family

The Shovabazar Raj in the British colony of Calcutta was founded by Nabakrishna. The Raj family was a landed aristocracy; it possessed wealth and acquired considerable social and political power in Calcutta - the growing mercantile centre of the English East India Company. Nabakrishna amassed money and gained eminence in association with this Company. In the eighteenth century Calcutta Nabakrishna was considered a 'mean man though rich'.[1] He was described 'a fortunate upstart' in the nineteenth century,[2] though the *ghatakas* or genealogists traced an illustrious root for him. It was claimed that Nabakrishna belonged to the Maulika *kayastha* Devas of Chitrapura.[3] Quoting *Kasimbazar Private Collection* one recent scholar concludes that the Debs of the Shovabazar Raj were *Kundus*, and belonged to *Subarnavanik* caste - lower than *Kayastha* in the Hindu caste heirarchy.[4] Pradip Sinha, however, while conceding to the Debs of Shovabazar prominence among the south-western branch of the *Kayastha* community cited N.N. Basu, *Banger Jatiya Itihas*[5] (Caste History of Bengal) to bring in his point. The *Mookerjee's Magazine* of late nineteenth century did not question the respectable *Kayastha* status of the Debs of Shovabazar, but it doubted the claim from the Shovabazar Raj that the forbears of Nabakrishna had had occupied respectable posts under either Nawabs or zamindars of Bengal, and asked for documentary evidence from the earliest biographers[6] of Raja Radhakanta Deb. In fact, the biographers of Radhakanta while

1. Justice Hyde of the Calcutta Supreme Court in *Hyde Notes*, Victoria Memorial Library MSS volumes, case of Manohar Mukherjee *vs* Trilok Charan Pakrasi, February 17, 1778, p. A18, quoted in Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, Calcutta, 1978, p.14.
2. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, Vol.1, No.1, February 1861, p.4.
3. The Editors of the Raja's Sabdakalpadruma, *A Rapid Sketch of the life of Raja Radhakanta Dev Bahadur, the testimonials of his character and learning*, Calcutta, 1859, p.5 (Hereinafter *A Rapid Sketch*).
4. S.N. Mukherjee, *Calcutta: Myths and History*, Calcutta, Janauary 1977, p. 98.
5. Pradip Sinha, *op.cit.*
6. *A Rapid Sketch*.

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tracing the history of his ancestors retrieved relevant information from the *ghatakas* whose sources were more oral than documentary.

Nabakrishna, grandfather of Radhakanta, was the youngest son of Ramacharan Deb. The Debs of Shovabazar descended from Srihari Deb, the 22nd in ascent from Nabakrishna, whose home was at Kansona near Murshidabad. Pitambar Khan, the ixth in descent from Srihari was a rich and powerful man among the *Maulika kayasthas* of his times. He once organized an *ekjai*, a congregation of *ghatakas* and *kulins* of his caste to determine ranks and classes within it, himself becoming its *gosthipati* or head; Pitambar also came to be known as *Dhanya* Pitambar, for he "caused a portion of a rivulet to be filled up with paddy for the kulins and Ghattacks to pass over" during the *ekjai* celebrations. It is also claimed that Pitambar had been at the court of one of the first Mughal governors of Bengal and received from him the title of *Khan Bahadur*. He had four great grandsons - Sivdas, Nityananda, Chaturbhuj and Srinath. Vidyadhar Deb, the ninth in descent from Nityananda settled down in Muragacha, first from Saudpur and then Najara in turn. His grandson, Debidas Majumdar, was the Kanungo of Muragacha. On his death one of his six sons "was confirmed by Nawab Alivardi Khan in his father's post and another Rukminikanta, who had settled at Panchagram i(Panchgaon) was appointed manager of the estate of Kesavarama Raya Chowdri, the Zemindar of Purganah Muragacha, then a minor, with the title of Vyavahartha".[8]

On the death of Rukminikanta his eldest son, Rameswar, succeeded him. Rameswar, however, made his zamindar Kesavram Roy Choudhury hostile towards him by increasing the amount of revenue payable to the Nawab, and the zamindar retaliated by imprisoning his manager. Ramachandra, the second son of Rameswar went to Murshidabad, introduced himself to the Rai Rayan and offered to increase the revenue of Muragacha to Rs. 50,000. By the good offices of the Rai Rayan Rameswar got himself appointed the *Wadader* (commissioner) of revenues of Muragacha, and on his return from Murshidabad, he released his father from imprisonment and took revenge by imprisoning the zamindar himself. Ramacharan decided not to stay back at Muragacha and came to Gobindapur, the site of Fort William in Calcutta.

Ramcharan was soon appointed by the Nawab Alivardi Khan the Salt-Agent and Collector of Hijli, Tamluk and Mahisadal in which office "he

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7. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, *op.cit.*, p. 7, also *A Rapid Sketch*, p.5.
8. *Ibid.*

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discharged his duties so satisfactorily that he was soon after rewarded with a very high and honourable situation."[9]

About this time Maniruddin Khan, the Subahdar of Cuttack got Ramcharan as his Dewan. Those were the days of Maratha incursions in Orissa and Bengal. Ramcharan and his Subahdar used to face the Marathas militarily, and in one such encounter Ramcharan was killed on their way to Cuttack from Midnapur. The above incident narrated in *A Rapid Sketch* was put to question by the *Mookerjee's Magazine*[10]. It contention was that no contemporary source did mention either the appointment of Muniruddin Khan as the Subahdar or the expedition described in *A Rapid Sketch*.

Ramcharan left behind his widow and three minor sons - Ramsundar, Manikya Chandra and Nabakrishna. The movable property that Ramcharan bequeathed to his widow and sons was also lost by the death of Khwaja Wajid, a wealthy merchant of Hughli, in whose care it was kept. Ramsundar, the eldest brother of Nabakrishna supported the family as an *ameen* or *supervisor* of Pachet. The Debs continued to live at Gobindapur till it was requisitioned by the English East India Company for the construction of Fort William. The Debs were compensated by a few thousands of rupees and lands in Arpuli. Ramsundar, however, decided not to settle in Arpuli and purchased instead a house and some *bighas* of land in Sutanati. This house provided a scaffolding for the future Shovabazar Raj in north Calcutta.[11]

Nabakrishna was born most probably at Gobindapur in C.1732. The earliest biographers[12] of Nabakrishna remarked that Nabakrishna was sixteen years old in 1756. It implies that he was born in 1740. *Mookerjee's Magazine* contends that if Nabakrishna in 1750 had been imparting Warren Hastings lessons in Persian, he might have completed his education before he was ten years old, which seemed possibly quite improbable. "Then as if to embarras the case still more, we are told that his education was finished at Moorshedabad. We are therefore obliged to bring him into the world

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9. *A Rapid Sketch*, p. 6.
10. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, *op.cit.*, pp.11-12.
11. For the history of Nabakrishna's ancestors *A Rapid Sketch*, pp. 5-7; *Mookerjee's Magazine*, Vol.1, No.1 February 1861, pp.4-12; Bepin Bihary Mitra, *Life of Maharaja Nabakrishna Deb Bahadur of Shovabazar*, Calcutta, 1879, pp. 1-8; N.N. Ghose, *Memoirs of Maharaja Nubkissen Bahadur*, Calcutta, 1901, pp. 3-6; also Satish Chandra Mitra, *Jasohar Khulnar Itihas*, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1329B.S., pp. 662-70. (Please see Genealogical Table at Appendix 'A'.
12. *A Rapid Sketch*, p.6.

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earlier than 1740."[13] It is therefore guessed that Nabakrishna was born about the year 1732.[14]

Nabakrishna studied Persian as it was the language of the Court and etiquette, and looked for an employment from the Banians to the Company like Naku Dhar and English merchants. At this time on the 8th October 1750 Warren Hastings arrived at Calcutta[15], and Nabakrishna was retained for his Persian lessons. These two young men became friendly. They were also to play distinguished role soon afterwards. In 1753 Hastings was sent to Kasimbazar, Nabakrishna accompanied him. "There, at Cossimbazar, he (Nabakrishna) may have perfected his Persian studies"[16] which led the authors of *A Rapid Sketch* claim that Nabakrishna had his Persian learning completed at Murshidabad.

Nabakrishna had been with Warren Hastings during the preliminary stages of conflicts between Siraj-ud-daula and the East India Company. Subsequently, he came to Calcutta to be put into the services of the Company by Drake of Fort William. Nabakrishna became the Munshi to the Company as he could be relied upon in the correspondence of conspiracy between the Company and the detractors of Nawab Siraj. This led to the dismissal of Tajuddin, the Muslim Munshi - but what actually led to his dismissal is not known. *A Rapid Sketch* wanted us to believe that the Company preferred a Hindu Munshi to a Muslim one[17]; it seems to be untenable during the time of Drake when the Hindu-Muslim conspiracy against Siraj was not fully crystallized.

However, Nabakrishna offered rewarding services to the Company when it was defeated in 1756 by Siraj and its officials had to leave Calcutta for Falta.[18] He saw to it that the Company officials could survive there more or less comfortably. From the recapture of Calcutta to the battle of Plassey Nabakrishna was the Company's Persian-Secretary and Translator dealing with its confidential and secret correspondence. Nabakrishna himself succinctly elaborated his services to the Company from 1756 to 1765. In a letter to the Council of Revenue, dated November 18, 1777 he wrote that his services to the Company, "from the year 1756 to the year 1757, an interval

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13. *Mookerjee's Magazine, op.cit.*, pp.20-21.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Gleig, *Memoirs of Hastings*, Vol.I, quoted in *Mookerjee's Magazine, op.cit.*
16. *Mookerjee's Magazine, op.cit.*
17. *A Rapid Sketch*, p.8.
18. K.K. Datta, *Studies in the History of the BEngal Subah*, 1740-1770, Vol.I, Calcutta, 1936, pp. 102-106.

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during which the welfare and interests of the Hon'ble Company were repeatedly in the most critical and dangerous situation marked his fidelity."[19] While further elaborating his most sincere attachment to the interests of the Company Nabakrishna wrote:

"1. His services under the Right Hon'ble Lord Clive (then Colonel Clive) in the Revolution which happened in consequence of the capture of Calcutta and subsequent defeat of Serajuddowlah, on which occasion your petitioner acted as Persian-Secretary and Translator, and was employed in all the most confidential translations. 2. His services under Major Adams, Commander-in-Chief in the Wars of the Nawab Kassimally Cawn, in which your petitioner had the sole management of all such negotiations and transaction with country powers and chief people as fell under the province of the Commander-in-Chief. 3. His services under Lord Clive on his return to India in the year 1764 when your Petitioner was the only native entrusted or employed in all the several Treaties which were made with the Mughal or King Shew Alum, the later Vizier Shuja-ud-Dowla etc., when the grant of the Diwani was obtained for the Hon'ble Company.[20]

The contention of the authors of *A Rapid Sketch* that Nabakrishna "was chiefly instrumental in bringing about the league between Mir Jafar and Colonel Clive, which terminated in the rule of Serajaddowla "has been put to question by the *Mookerjee's Magazine*.[20a] It argues, "He (Nabakrishna) is not once mentioned in Clive's or any body else's letters, during the negotiations preceding the overthrow of Siraj-u-Dowlah."[21] The *Mookerjee's Magazine* also doubted the statement of *A Rapid Sketch* that Nabakrishna had settled the terms of Subadari between Mir Jafar and Clive.[22]

One aspect of Nabakrishna's career not mentioned in *A Rapid Sketch* and contradicted by N.N. Ghose relates to his involvement of the loot of Siraj's inner treasury along with Clive and his Company. Quoting *Seir Mutaqherin* the *Mookerjee's Magazine* writes that the inner treasury of Siraj was divided among, besides Clive and other Company officials, Mir Jafar, Amirbeg Khan, Ramchand and Nabakrishna.[23] Though Nabakrishna's alleged share in the plunder of Siraj's inner treasury has not been corroborated by any documentary evidence, yet the arguments of the *Mookerjee's*

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19. N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, pp. 24-25.
20. *Ibid.*
20a *Mookerjee's Magazine*, *op.cit.*, p.30.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23 *Ibid.*

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Magazine on his income and accumulated wealth is worth quoting. It writes "Navakrishna's pay as Moonshi...was Rupees sixty a month. Besides occasional presents, which were inconsiderable he had no emoluments belonging to his office. How could he be enable to spend nine lacs at his mother's shradh; if he had not made his fortune out of his portion of Clive's share of the spoils of the inner treasury."[24] *The Mookerjee's Magazine*, however, did not record one consultation of the Select Committee dated January 16, 1767 wherein it was resolved that in consideration of his faithful and diligent services Nabakrishna, Munshi to the Company "be appointed the Hon'ble Company's political banian, with a salary annexed of 200 rupees per mensem the same to commence from this date,"[25] of 16 January 1767.

In 1765 after the battle of Buxar and during the second administration of Robrt Clive Nabakrishna accompanied the former to Allahabad for the historic settlement with Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor and Nawab Shuja-ud-dowla of Awadh. At that time Nabakrishna was honoured with the title of *Raja Bahadur* and the rank of *Mansab Panchhazari* with three thousand *sowars* by Shah Alam on Clive's request. In 1765 Clive got a *farman* from Shah Alam granting Raja Nabakrishna the rank of *Mansab Shashhazari* with four thousand *sowars* and the title of 'Maharaja'.[26] But the *Friend of India*[27] in 1838 doubted whether Nabakrishna received the titles of 'Raja' and 'Maharaja' in 1765 and 1766 respectively. It pointed out that Nabakrishna was designated 'Moonshee' in a complaint which a goldsmith had brought against him in 1767. "We conclude", commented the *Friend of India*, "that the title of Rajah must have been acquired at a subsequent date" after 1767. It is doubtful whether the views expressed by the *Friend of India* were based upon authentic sources. From a letter by Nawab Shuja-ud-dowla of Awadh to the English India Company it is known that Nabakrishna was "Raja Nob Kishn".[28] Further, a letter dated May 16, 1768 from Munirud-Daulah, a Minister of Emperor Shah Alam to Clive mentioned Nabakrishna as 'Maharaja Nob Kishn'.[29] It is thus most likely that the *Friend of India* had not consulted the Persian records of the East India Company. *Naba Munshi* "was by his title raised as it were to the Peerage and placed far above his contemporaries

24. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, Vol.I, No.II, March 1861, pp.77.
25. Quoted in the Revd. J. Long, *Selections from Unpublished Records of Government for the year 1748 to 1767 inclusive*, Reprinted Calcutta 1973, p. 677.
26. N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, pp. 44-46; *A Rapid Sketch*, p.10.
27. *The Friend of India*, Vol.IV, No.171, 5 April 1838, p.147.
28. Letter from Shuja-ud-dowlah to the Company, dated April 17, 1767, *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.II, 1767-9, Imperial Record Department, Calcutta 1914, p.93.
29. *Ibid.*, p.271.

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like the Setts, Mittres, Mullicks and Dhurs."[30]

As the Political Banian to the Company Nabakrishna acted almost like a Foreign Secretary of to-day. For example, Mir Jafar on January 26, 1765 informed Nabakrishna of the Dutch mercantile activities in Bengal, which were to be brought to the notice of Clive, the Governor, for his action.[31] In January- February 1767 the Company had been negotiating with Januji Bhonsla, the Raja of Nagpur for a political territorial settlement with him. Mir Zainul Abidin was sent to Nagpur by Clive. He used to report his activities direct to Nabakrishna who briefed the Governor on the progress of the mission to Nagpur.[32]

Lor Thurlow during the trial of Warren Hastings described Nabakrishna before the House of Lords "as only inferior in point of emoluments or political consequence to Mahomed Reza Khan".[33] Nabakrishna was, in fact, "superior to both Kanta Babu or Dewan Ganga Gobinda Singh"[34] - his two powerful and wealthy contemporaries. There was regular official correspondence between Md. Reza Khan and Nabakrishna. Nabakrishna in January 1768 wrote Reza Khan desiring him to ask Kashmiri Mal to draw a bill on some one in Bombay for payment to Hodge, the Governor of that Presidency.[35] But the steady demand of money from Clive on Reza Khan amounted almost to the latter's fleecing. In January 1768 Reza Khan wrote Nabakrishna his unpleasant plight. As per Clive's instructions Nabakrishna directed Reza Khan to arrange for a loan of Rs.1,20,000 to be given to Jean Baptiste, Chevalier of the French Company. Reza Khan pointed out that though "his happiness consists in obeying the Governor's orders", yet he had already borrowed Rs.50,000 to pay the same amount already due from the Company to the bankers at Murshidabad, and "it is impossible for him to procure Rs.1,20,000 for His Excellency."[36] Nabakrishna was requested by Reza Khan in April 1768 not to write him repeatedly asking for more and more money.[37]

The Company ever since the achievement of Dewani had been after money

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30. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, March 1861, No.2, pp. 89-90.
31. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.I, 1759-1767, Calcutta, 1911, pp. 375-76.
32. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.II, p. 25.
33. *A Rapid Sketch*, pp. 12-13, *Mookerjee's Magazine*, No.III, April 1861, p.162; N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, p.2.
34. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, April 1861, p. 147.
35. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.II, p.220.
36 *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

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for its business, because it mismanaged the economic administration of Bengal, and the operation of inexorable laws of mercantilism demanded it. As early as 1766 when Nabakrishna informed Reza Khan of the scarcity of money the Company had been experiencing for its business, the latter replied that "God knews that writer (Reza Khan) is trying hard to procure it (money), and will not neglect this business."[38] Nabakrishna by the year 1766 had become so powerful that he desired Reza Khan to grant two villages, Tarakpur and Bansi, to one Shyam Ghosh. Reza Khan was glad to oblige Nabakrishna.[39] He used to send also presents to Clive through Nabakrishna. In 1766 he sent Clive a piece of gold embroidered *muslin* suitable for a turban. He also promised to send flowered cloth wanted by Clive.[40]

The Faujdar of Bhagalpur considered Nabakrishna his real 'benefactor', and "expects favours from the Raja (Nabakrishna) on all occasions". He further "hopes that the Raja has not forgotten his application for an altamghah." The Faujdar added, "God knews that he has incurred debt in order to pay the stipulated amount of revenue in full. In future, if the Raja (Nabakrishna) will not show the writer favour in this direction (grant of an *altamghah* solicited by the Faujdar), he will be unable to discharge the full amount."[41] As the Political Banian Nabakrishna was the liaison between the Company and other Indian powers like the Raja of Benares and the Peshwa who had their representatives in Calcutta. In 1778 Ali Naqi, the *Vakil* of Chait Singh, the Raja of Benares contacted Nabakrishna to inform him of the inability and difficulties Chait Singh had been facing for the maintenance of the Company's battalions in Benares.[42] Nabakrishna on the recommendation of R. Barwell, one of the members of Governor-General's Council, was selected a member of the Enquiry Committee constituted to examine papers seized from Jagmohan Datta who used to visit secretly the house of Lala Sevak Ram, the Peshwa's *Vakil*. There were, however, no incriminatory matter in those papers.[43] It is guessed that Cartier was perhaps reluctant to allow Nabakrishna access to confidential and secret papers of the Company. Cartier on 28 February 1770 wrote Raja Murli Dhar (a well-wisher of the Company) that the latter would not in future send any information meant for the Company through Nabakrishna. He also questioned the authority of the

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38. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.II, p.11 (Supplement)
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*,p. 6.
41. *Ibid.*, p.13.
42. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.V: 1776-80, Imperial Record Department, Calcutta, 1930, p.195.
43. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.III: 1770-72, Imperial Record Department, Calcutta, 1919, p.45.

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practice of despatching news to the Governor through the Political Dewan.[44]

Nabakrishna supervised as well some of the important offices of the Company in his Shovabazar buildings. They were (1) *Munshi Daftar* (Persian Secretary's Office), (2) *Arzbezi Daftar* (Petition receiving Office), (3) *Jatimala Kachari* (Tribunal for hearing and adjudicating cases relative to caste), (4) *Money godown* (Company's Treasury), (5) *Mal Adalat* (Financial Court), of the 24-Parganas and (6) *Tehsil Daftar* (Office of the Collector of the 24-Pargans).[46] Thus the *Mookerjee's Magazine* exclaimed "This man was half the Government."[46] It wrote further more, "it must be said to his (Nabakrishna's) credit that he used a power which no Bengalee has since possessed, power more than a Cabinet Minister'd and little less than the Governor-General's"[47] In fact, the Bengali *bhadralok* in the second half of the 19th century felt proud of Nabakrishna's achievements and lamented their career getting blocked since Nabakrishna's days at clerical and petty official level.[48]

Partly in recognition of his faithful services to the Company and because of his close, if not intimate, relations with Warren Hastings that Nabakrishna was granted *talukdari* of sutanati, Baghbazar and Hoglakandi in 1778. From a petition of Raja Radhakanta Deb, Nabakrishna's grandson, it is known[49] that the *talukdari* of Sutanati was granted to Nabakrishna in exchange for his village Noapara; the annual revenue payable to the Company in respect of Sutanati was granted to Nabakrishna in exchange for his village Noapara; the annual revenue payable to the Company in respect of Sutanati was fixed at Rs.1239.13.10. Earlier in 1767 Nabakrishna and Gocul Ghosal tried to procure the farming rights of Calcutta lands at 13 lacs of rupees per annum for a period of three years. The Company considered their offer and came to the conclusion that "Nabakrishna's present station gives him so great an influence in the country that the ryots might be alarmed and apprehensive of oppression and no native should be trusted with more power than is absolutely necessary, (therefore) it would be highly improper to let the lands to farm to Nubkissen and Gocul on any terms whatever."[50]

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44. *Ibid.*
45. *A Rapid Sketch*, pp.10-11; N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, pp.53-54; *Mookerjee's Magazine*, No.III, April 1861, pp. 146-47.
46. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, Vol.III, April 1861, p.147.
47. *Ibid.*, Vol.IV, May 1861, p.218.
48. *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, No.156, Sraban 1778 sak, quoted in Benoy Ghose (ed.) *Samayikpatre Bangalar Samajchitra*, 1840-1905, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1963, pp. 46, 183.
49. *Home Revenue, Consultation* Nos. 1-4, 13 May 1853.
50. The Revd. J. Long (ed.) *op.cit.*, p.665.

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The *Mookerjee's Magazine* wrote that as Nabakrishna got from Emperor Shah Alam the title of *Maharajendra* for Maharaj Krishna Chandra of Nadia, the latter in gratitude presented the former the villages of Sreerampur and Mulajore without liability to pay rent.[51] In July 1769, Reza Khan issued *parwana* to the *muqaddams, karamcharis* and ryots of Ukhra and other areas in the zamindari of Maharaja Krishna Chandra to the effect that those parganas had been leased out for three years to Nabakrishna and fourteen other *banians* to the Company. These *ijaradars* would collect revenues and were also empowered to grant lands as *devottar* and *brahmottar*.[52]

Market place in Shovabazar area was farmed out to Nabakrishna in perpetuity in 1774 for a sum of five hundred rupees.[53] *Hats* or market places were a major source of income for even a rich and powerful man like Nabakrishna or Dewan Ganga Gobinda Singh. It so happened in 1790 that Ganga Gobinda Singh complained to the Company against Nabakrishna who got a bazar owned by the former in Jorasanko on the border of Sutanati demolished.[54] The verdict of the Collector was however in favour of Nabakrishna on the ground that one could not establish a bazar near an existing one which regularly paid revenue to th Government. As a matter of fact what Ganga Gobinda Singh tried to bring to the notice of the Company was the inapplicability of the regulation referred to by the Collector in Calcutta where many bazars had been established in close proximity to one another. Ganga Gobinda Singh in his petition raised also the question of the extent of Nabakrishna's power as a *talukdar* of Sutanati. It was contended that Nabakrishna was only 'the manager' of the lands in Sutanati, who was only entitled to collect a fixed rent while those who purchased the land became "the proprietors with the right to sell or make a gift of it or utilise it in any way they please."[55] Nabakrishna could not also enhance the rent of the land or bazar purchased and established by Ganga Gobinda Singh,[56] who however hoped that his bazar might be allowed to function normally.

There were other allegations against Nabakrishna for grabbing *hats* or bazars by violating the regulation that a *hat* could not be established near

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51. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, No.IV, May 1861, p.218.
52. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.III, p.381.
53. Durgaprasad & Archana Bhattacharya, "Records relating to Calcutta", *Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings of the Forty seventh Session* Vol.XLVII, Delhi, May 1981, p.114.
54. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.IX, 1790-91, National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1949, pp.94-95.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*

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a revenue paying old one in *mufassil*. In a petition to the Company the mother of Lutfullah of Bandipur wrote that there were some *hats* owned by her in Bandipur. Nabakrishna had established a *hat* on his own land adjoining to her village, and as a result her *hats* were deserted and ruined. She further told that it was out of the income of these *hats* that she paid the *malguzari* and supported herself. Nabakrishna also wanted to farm out her village against her will and interest. It was her prayer to the Governor that she might be granted a *sanad* reiterating her privileges "formerly enjoyed by her and appoint a guard to prevent the Raja (Nabakrishna) from continuing his hat."[57]

Nabakrishna was appointed *Sezawal* or manager of *Chakla* Burdwan on 25 July 1780 as the Maharaja of Burdwan, Tej Chandra Bahadur, was then a minor and its revenues were inadequately collected. He as *Sezawal* settled with the Company the revenue of Burdwan at about thirty eight lacs of rupees a year, which was decidedly exorbitant and unprecedented. His exactions were very great and the *sezawalship* proved a failure. In 1788 the Maharaja of Burdwan wrote to the Company narrating the most unhappy affairs of his estate. He wrote that "since the commencement of the Company's rule the assessment of Chakla Burdwan has increased every year and is now almost double of the revenue assessed during the reign of Nawab Ali Vardi Khan."[58] The Maharaja further stated that he had to borrow money and even sell his personal belongings to clear his dues. Nabakrishna also failed to meet the demands of the Company inspite of adopting stringent and harsh measures which were even disliked by Warren Hastings. Nabakrishna in March 1781 imprisoned Gocul Chandra Chaudhury for not paying revenues on time. Warren Hastings disapproved of Nabakrishna's activities and questioned the power he had assumed in imprisoning Gocul Chandra Chaudhury.[59] Nabakrishna was also accused of other irregularities in Burdwan. Bayne, a subordinate officer in the Supreme Court of Judicature, reported to the Company in September 1785 that Nabakrishna had given the former a contract for the construction of a bridge at Burdwan in five years from 1781. On this understanding Bayne to live in Burdwan had built a house at Burdwan at a cost of Rs.11,649-10-6. The work continued for two years and then Nabakrishna said that the bridge could be completed by himself at a lesser cost. As the contract was not made in writing, the work

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57. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.IV: 1772-5, Imperial Record Department, Calcutta, 1925, pp. 222-23.
58. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.VIII: 1788-89 National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1953, pp. 160-61.
59. *Home Law Proceedings*: 5 January - 18 December 1781

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was taken away from Bayne. Bayne requested the Company to intervene for the realisation of compensation from Nabakrishna. The Company, however, did not ask Nabakrishna to make good of the loss incurred by Bayne; it instructed, on the other hand, Maharaja Tej Chand to see that the money spent by Bayne in building the house might be paid to the petitioner.[60]

A *mansabdar* of Mughal tradition in the payroll of the English East India Company Nabakrishna's power and position in the society had been equally dominating as it was in the political sphere in which, however, he was a powerful personality even beyond Bengal. As he was the Judge of the caste-Tribunal, Nabakrishna was the citizen-chief of the Hindu community of at least Calcutta. He assumed such social power and status that even his other rich contemporaries like Dewan Ramchand Roy of Andul, Dewan Gocul Chandra Ghosal of Bhukailesh, Dewnan Ganga Gobinda Singh and Kantobabu of Kasimbazar could never surpass. Like one of his ancestors, Purandar Khan who convened the 13th conference or *ekjai* of the south-western branch of the *kayasthas*, Nabakrishna in 1781 organized the 22nd *ekjai*. In 1791 he married his son Rajkrishna Deb to the daughter of one of the prominent *kulins*, and on that occasion four thousand cavalry befitting Nabakrishna's Mughal status of mansab *shash-hazari* were paraded.[61]

Nabakrishna made the worship of goodess Durga a public rather than a private ceremony. He saw to it that the Hindu ceremony be celebrated properly, and got the whole ritual carefully compiled by competent men - the relevant hymns were also translated into Bengali.[62] Oral tradition popular in Calcutta has it that wishing to celebrate Durga Puja in honour of the British victory at the battle of Plassey (1757), Nabakrishna summoned a *kumar* from Krishnanagar in Nadia district, to make an image of Durga, the goddess of victory. Eventually, several Calcutta families wanted to follow Nabakrishna's example and the *kumars* got themselves settled in Kumartuli in Northern Calcutta.[63] Another British success - the victory of the English over the sepoys in the revolt of 1857 - was celebrated by Raja Radhakanta, a grandson of Nabakrishna.

In the sphere of culture, Nabakrishna has been described 'Maecenas'[64] of Bengal, where the wisdom of *Vedanta* was almost extinct by the 18th

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60. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.VII, Calcutta, 1940, p. 119.
61. Pradip Sinha, *op.cit.*, pp. 86-87.
62. N.N. Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p. 177.
63. Jim Robinson, "The Kumars of Kumartuli", *The India Magazine of her people and culture*, Vol.3 No.12, November 1983, pp. 24-32.
64. N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, p. 184.

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century. He brought *Vedanta pandits* from Benares for its cultivation in Bengal.[65] Nabakrishna patronised such learned pandits as Jagannath Tarkapanchanan (1694-1807), Vaneswar Vidyalankar, Radhakanta and Shankar.[66] Nabakrishna for *Babasthapothi* translated for Warren Hastings.[67] It may well be presumed that Nabakrishna provided Warren Hastings with Sanskrit books and manuscripts in the latter's search for orientalism.

Nabakrishna was also a patron of popular music. Haru Thakur (1738-1813) and Netai Das, the two contemporary eminent *kabiwala* were his proteges. Kuluichandra Sen, an exponent of finer *akhrai* songs was patronised by Nabakrishna[68]. Ramnidhi Gupta (1741-1839) popularly known as Nidhu Babu further improvised *akhrai*; he in fact introduced what we now call Nidhu Babu's *tappa*. To patronize music had also been a passion with Raja Radhakanta Deb and Maharaja Kamal Krishna Deb, two eminent grandsons of Nabakrishna. During the last sad years of Ramnidhi Gupta both Radhakanta and Kamalkrishna looked after him.[69] Dasarathi, the most eminent promoter of *panchali* songs and ballad was given due recognition by Radhakanta, though in Calcutta he was hardly appreciated as he was not a Calcuttan.[70]

Towards public charity Nabakrishna had to his credit a thirty-two miles long road from Behala to Kulpi[71] and another near his house at Shovabazar, two bathing ghats on the river Hughli and a large tract of land for the erection of St. John's cathedral; he also contributed liberally towards the establishment of the Calcutta Madrassa.[72] Nabakrishna was presented, for his charities, with a gold medal by the Court of Directors.[73]

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65. *A Rapid Sketch*, p. 12, Dilip Kumar Biswas, "Rammohun and Vedanta" *Visvabharati Patrika*, Kartick-Paus, 1379 BS, p.144.
66. *A Rapid Sketch*, p.12; N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, p.184; *Sambad Vaskar*, 23 May 1854, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, 1818-30, vol.1, Calcutta, 1356 Bs, p. 457.
67. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol.IV: 1772-5, p. 229.
68. Manmathanath Ghosh, *Rangalal*, Calcutta, 1336 BS, pp. 73-74; Sushil Kumar Gupta, *Unabimsa Satabdir Jagaran*, Calcutta, 1959, p.148; N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, p.186; Haripada Chakraborty, *Dasarathi O thahar panchali*, Calcutta, 1367 BS, p.33; Kalapencha (Benoy Ghose), *Calcutta Culture*, Calcutta, 1360 BS, p.29.
69. Manmathanath Ghose, *op.cit.*, p.74.
70. Haripada Chakraborty, *op.cit.*, p. 107.
71. N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, p. 176; *Somprokash*, 27 August 1860, quoted in Brajendranth Bandopadhyay (ed.) *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, 1830-1840, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1356 BS, p. 747; Ananda Krishna Bose, "A short account of the Residents of Calcutta in the year 1822" reprinted in Alok Ray (ed.), *Calcutta Keepsake*, Calcutta, 1978, p.303.
72. N.N. Ghose, *op.cit.*, p. 176.
73. *Foreign Department, Miscellaneous Volume*, No.130.

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Before his death on 22 November 1797 Nabakrishna had adopted Gopimohun the youngest son of his eldest brother, Ramsunder. But as Rajkrishna was born subsequently to the adoption he was considered the youngest son of Nabakrishna. By the contract made at the time of adoption, Gopimohun became entitled to share the estate equally with Rajkrishna; subsequently the contract was approved by the Supreme Court as well.[74]

Gopimohun, the adopted son of Nabakrishna was born in 1763 and died in 1836. During his life time Gopimohun lived upto the power and glory of the Shovabazar Raj founded by his father, but Nabakrishna's own son, Rajkrishna was "an irregular youth, thoughtless, extravagant, hating business, (and) loving pleasure."[75] The *Mookerjee's Magazine* wrote that Gopimohun succeeded Nabakrishna to the leadership of the Hindu community. He, in fact "improved that position by imparting to it austere and puritanic tinge of orthodoxy well befitting it, which was entirely absent from Nabakrishna."[76] Speaking about Rajkrishna the *Mookerjee's Magazine* commented that he lacked all the qualities of a leader - he was "a rake and vagabond."[77] Rajkrishna was, however, well versed in genealogical studies and "deeply attached to *kulagranthas* (genealogical works)... The famous genealogist, old Kasinath Bose was his chief adviser."[78] Rajkrishna did also organize in 1813 the 23rd *ekjai* of the *kayasthas* attended by powerful nobles among the said caste.

Gopimohun was a Persina scholar. He also knew Sanskrit. He used to listen to abstruse discussion in logic and metaphysics by the *pandits* who used to visit the Shovabazar palace. Gopimohun successively served as Dewan to John Stables, a member of the Supreme Council, to General James Rivet Carnac, first Commander- in-Chief, and to john Macpherson, Governor-General. During the administration of Lord William Bentinck Gopimohun received the title "Raja" and "Bahadur",[79] but he was commonly known as Babu Gopimohun Deb, a `Great Commoner'.[80] He earned the gratitude of the people of Calcutta by giving up a tract of land at Mechua Bazar for the use of the public[81]. What was most singular about Gopimohun was his interest in geographical and astronomical studies and researches.

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74. *Ibid.*
75. *Mookeerjee's Magazine*, Vol.I, No.IV, May 1861, p.220.
76. *Ibid.*, p.223.
77. *Ibid.*
78. Pradip Sinha, *op.cit.*, p. 88.
79. *A Rapid Sketch*, p.15.
80. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, May 1861, p.222.,
81. Alok Ray (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.303.

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He constructed Terrestrial and Celestial globes and prepared a map of the world - all according to Indian tradition and knowledge. The *Mookerjee's Magazine* was convinced that he was "probably the only man after Raja Joy Singh who took into his head to take such a practical interest in Hindoo astronomy and geography."[82] Gopimohun had also passionate love for machinery. He employed Chinese to learn mechanical engineering from them and attempted to construct machines, without much success however. One of Gopimohun's unfinished instruments was an attempt to construct a permanent calendar to indicate years, months, days of the week, *tithis* (phases of the moon) and *nakshatras*. Another unfinished machine of his was a self-moving *punkah* or fan.[83] Gopimohun, like his father was also a patron of music and man of letters. When Gopimohun died on 17 March 1836, he was already a leader of Hindu orthodoxy which figured prominently in Calcutta in the days of liberalism of Rammohun Roy and the Derozians.

Gopimohun Deb was survived by his only son, Radhakanta Deb who was born on 11 March 1784 at the house of his maternal uncle at Simla in Calcutta. In 1794 when Radhakanta was ten years old, Nabakrishna arranged the marriage of the former with the daughter of the eminent *gosthipati* family of Gopikanta Singh Chaudhury. This marriage bestowed upon Radhakanta the status of the 13th *gosthipati* of the south-western branch of the *kayastha* community.[84] It seems, however, that Radhakanta was not very much enthusiastic about *ekjais*. Ashutosh Deb or Chatu Babu, son of Ramdulal De decided to arrange the 24th *ekjai*, and when he expressed his desire to Radhakanta, the latter raised no objections. But when Chatu Babu in 1844 was arranging *ekjai* most of the members of the Shovabazar Raj considered it a threat to their social leadership and they, in fact, organized two conferences of the 24th *ekjai* to outshine the glory of the descendents of Ramdulal De who were contended with one.

Radhakanta started learning Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit languages from his boyhood. Nabakrishna was then still alive to supervise the education of his grandson. He quite well understood the importance of learning the English language - the language of the victors of Nawabs and Emperors. Radhakanta was therefore sent to Cunning's Calcutta Academy at Bowbazar in Calcutta for English education. Sambhuchandra Vidyaratna, an earlier biographer of Radhakanta wrote that he also knew Hindi and Urdu. While listening to Sanskrit *slokas* from the *pandits* Radhakanta felt the

82. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, May 1861, p.228.
83. *Op.cit.*, pp. 228-29; *A Rapid Sketch*, p. 16.
84. Pradip Sinha, *op.cit.*, p.88.

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necessity of compiling a Sanskrit dictionary. Gopimohun fully subscribed to Radhakanta's noble intentions and even granted his son a *talukdari* for sustaining and completing the task which Radhakanta really performed in fifty years in compiling his *magnum opus*, *sabdakalpadruma*.[85]

The *Mookerjee's Magazine* called Radhakanta the first of the "Educated Natives, the father of Young Bengal."[86] It cautioned its readers in the second half of the 19th century that Radhakanta was to be understood not only in the perspective of liberalism of Rammohun Roy and the Derozians but in that of rabbid Hindu orthodoxy and immobility of the 18th century - Bengal. Radhakanta learned English language and started reading printed books in an age when to peruse printed books amounted to abjuration of Hinduism. Radhakanta in the prime of his youth was called `Christian' and `Atheist' as he was getting himself acquainted with new and novel western information that had started reaching Calcutta along with the British.

The *Mookerjee's Magazine* conjectured that Gopimohun Deb, Radhakanta's orthodox Hindu father was requested by his orthodox brethern not to allow his son exposure to changes brought forth by an alien or *yavana* agency, the English. But Gopimohun and Radhakanta maintained "domestic harmony diversified by strong differences of opinion and pursuits."[87] Radhakanta, in fact, lived through the changes and succeeded as well his father as the President of the *Dharma Sabha*, the institution of the conservative Hindus. The Shovabazar Raj founded by Nabakrishna stood at the crossroads of feudal culture and power and dynamic mercantilism of the English Company. Being born at such a historic juncture in a family possessing both political and money power Radhakanta inherited streaks of Hindu orthodoxy and acquired new learning and understanding that delimited his sphere of activities in the 19th century Bengal. Radhakanta was indeed a product of political, economic and social changes that Bengal experienced since the middle of the 18th century under the English East India Company when `Bengal Subah' and its capital `city'[88] Murshidabad had been giving way to the Presidency of Fort William and Calcutta.

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85. Sambhuchandra Vidyaratna, *Charitmala, Pratham Bhag*, Calcutta, 1302 BS.
86. *Mookerjee's Magazine*, May 1861, p.238.
87. *Op.cit.*, pp. 240-41.
88. In the 18th century the English referred to Murshidabad as 'the city' Ref: H. Beveridge, *The trial of Mahraja Nand Kumar - A Narrative of a Judicial Murder*, Calcutta, 1886, p.30.

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B. Le milieu - The Times

During the life and times of Nabakrishna two major incidents - the victory of the English East India Company over the Nawab of Bengal and the grant of *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the Company by the Mughal Emperor - had taken place. They marked the beginning of colonial rule in Bengal. The battle of Plassey besides showing the intrinsic weakness of the government of the Nawab of Bengal exhibited the quickness and mobility of mercantilism embodied in the East India Company. With the acquisition of *diwani* in 1765 the Company now stood face to face with the Bengal subah both at the rural and urban levels. So long it had looked for its collaborators and exportable merchandise in Bengal, but after the achievement of *diwani* it started understanding lands, people and government of Bengal in depth.

The company, however, started taking interest in the administration of the Nawab even before 1765. Mir Kasim was advised in 1760 to see that the revenues of the state were not wasted on any personal pleasures of a Nawab and the royal treasury be maintained properly. The Nawab was told that uneconomic expenditure would keep the army unpaid and lead, consequently, to imposition of heavy taxes. Unproductive and uneconomic expenditure out of the exchequer would result as had resulted during the reign of Mir Jafar in "the dispersion of the wealthy merchants and inhabitants through fear - the misery of the poor through oppression, loss of public credit, interruption of trade, scarcity of necessaries of life, mutinous commotion in the army for want of pay and universal disaffection of the people of all ranks and degrees."[89] The Nawab was also told to administer his kingdom efficiently, and guard himself against temptations of idealness and pleasures. He was asked to supervise the functions of his officials who were no less prone to idle pleasure and had been squanderes of money.

Mir Kasim was taught as well that "Economy is the grand medicine by which only the strength and vigor of the province can be restored."[90] The first step towards effecting economy was the reduction in the amount of "private disbursements of the palace, in building country houses (and) making gardens."[91]

The Nawab had also to gain the affection of his people and make them happy. He had to take care that "no man's life or estate is taken away

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89. *Fort William: Select Committee Proceedings*, 1760.
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*

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without a fair and public trial" and remember that "justice is the first ornament of a Prince."[92] Mir Kasim was further advised "a strict observance of his word and agreements...extended to the lowest subject and to every circumstance."[93] He was told that in India "after letting out a district for a certain term at a certain price"[94] it very often happens that before the expiry of the term the revenues were further increased, and the contractor consequently faced difficulties to realise the increased revenues from the people. Mir Kasim was advised to see that the revenue paying subjects were to oppressed. But inspite of all such advice and sound principle, it was due to mercantile colonialism and the overlordship of the Company that Bengal had become, since the Plassey, a place for loot and plunder by the Company officials and their Indian collaborators. Even after the defeat of Mir Kasim when Robert Clive was called upon to set the corrupted and corrupting affairs of the Company in order, he uttered some homilies against corruption. He told he saw all around `an almost corruption' and decided "to establish a Country Government to secure the commercial interest, and to perpetuate the revenue of the Company, to form the Military and to amend the Civil Department."[95]

However efficient administration Clive intended to introduce in Bengal, he could not eradicate the defects of a Company of merchants turned into a territorial sovereign. It was hardly probable that the government in Bengal directed by a group of alien merchants could introduce here efficient administration. It in fact, throttled the mechanism of pre-colonial economic forces. Richard Becher in 1769 wrote, "It must give pain to an Englishmen to have a Reason to think that since the Accession of the Company to the Dewanee the condition of the people of this country (Bengal) has been worse than it was before..."[96] Becher analysed the causes of the decline of the economy of Bengal, and believed that the collectors of revenue tried to realise as much revenue as possible without considering the capability of the payers. The *amils* among the Indian officials were particularly exacting leaving the people absolutely ruined and completely sucked. The system of collection of revenue prevalent in Bengal during the administration of the Nawabs had been, on the whole, less exacting and the *mulgazari* arrived at between a zamindar and the Nawab was on moderate terms. The Nawab used not to increase suddenly the rate of revenue payment causing discomfiture to the zamsindar. Thus, Becher

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92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Select Committee Proceedings, 7 May - 27 December 1765.*
96. *Foreign Select Committee* (India Office Copy); 1765-1769, Vol.20A.

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told, the Nawab - the zamindar and the ryot gave Bengal a sound economy. But raising large sums of money by the Company "to answer the pressing demands from home (England) and defray the large Expenses here (in India)" weakened Bengal economically beyond reproach. The *amils* who were sent to *mofussil* to meet the English demands became oppressive and possessors of unearned income at the cost of the ryots. The Governor-General, however, expressed his views in 1795 pointing out the basic characteristics of the English rule in India. He wrote, "the British Dominion established in India..must be deemed unnatural, and can only be reconciled to the people by the Humanity and moderation with which it is administered." He also mentioned that the "allegiance and attachment" of the Indian people "to an European Sovereign must be imperfect...Our situation in this country can never be pronounced free from danger, since we are always in the power of the Natives over whom we rule."[97]

The servants of the Company indulged in irregular trading activities as well, which "touched not just foreign trade but cut deeply into the fabric of the internal commerce of Bengal."[98] Adam Smith described these activities of the Company's servants as the `moonlighting'[99] ones that made the illpaid company servants `Nabobs' in their own country and helped their Indian, particularly Bengali, collaborators ape decadent Mughal imperial tradition of a *mansabdar* or *jagirdar* in Calcutta. And the commercial activities of the Company were generally geared to their colonial interests both in India and abroad. From Fort William in Bengal remittances in money, bills and goods had to reach Bombay and Madras Presidencies for their maintenance and also for financing wars against the Marathas and Mysore. In the 80s of the 18th century "about an hundred thousand pounds a year is also remitted from Bengal, on the Company's account, to China, and the whole of product of that money flows into the direct Trade from China to Europe.'[100] The effects of the colonial activities of the Company in Bengal were observed in the economic ruin of rural Bengal, the decline of indigenous industries which, however, facilitated nescent industrial revolution in England and also in the emergence of a few rich landed aristocrat families who assured the Company of a non-variable amount of land revenue.

James Mill after thinking and understanding the poor state of Indian

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97. *Ibid*; *Foreign-Secret, 22 June 1795, No.1.*
98. William J. Barber, *British Economic thought and India, 1600-1858: A study in the History of Development Economics, Oxford, 1975, p.96.*
99. Adam Smith quoted in *Ibid.*
100. P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, Vol.V- *India: Madras and Bengal: 1774-1785*, Oxford, 1981, p.226.

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economy came to the conclusion that the very Indian society and its institutions were responsible for its utter poverty, total immobility and degradation. He stated that the English could not be held responsible for the Indian poverty, and asked the Indians to follow the examples of the British for their welfare.[101] Mill thought that the economic life of India was fundamentally Hindu, and the Hindus had been incapable of any improvements in any sphere of life due to their primitive religion of caste distinctions and idol worship, faulty law, low state of morality and were "unworthy to eat, drink, or to sit with a member of the classes above them."[102] It may be conjectured that the English idea about the Hindus sprang from their conviction that the people of India were the descendants of the *gentiles* of Palestine, against whom the Jews of the Old Testament fought battles, and they could not be converted to Islam. That perhaps explains why the British very often in their earlier days in India used to call the Hindus *Gentoo* or *Gentile*.[103] Charles Grant, an Evangelical laity, who had spent twenty two years from 1768 to 1798 in Bengal considered the Hindu religion the root cause for Bengal's misery and suggested that Christianity and western education might be introduced in India for her moral and material prosperity.[104]

The British Government accepted Grant's arguments while passing the Charter Act of 1813. The preamble to the Act stipulated that the government would promote thew interests and happiness of the Indians living in British dominions, and such measures would be adopted "as may tend to the introduction among (the Indians) of useful knowledge, and of religious and moral improvements; and in furtherance of the above subjects, sufficient facilities ought to be afforded by law to persons desirous of accomplishing those benevolent designs."[105] It was also contended that out of the surplus revenues of India the Company would spend per annum a sum of one lac of rupees for the education of the Indians. There was thus an initiative on the part of the government to promote education in India. In fact, there were some government and government sponsored institutions like the Calcutta School Book Society, the Calcutta School Society and the General Committee of Public Instruction which had programmed to popularize education. In Calcutta mass education through the uplift of *pathsalas*,

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101. James Mill, *The History of British India*, Vol.1, Reprint, New Delhi, 1972
102. *Ibid.*, p.276.
103. P.J. Marshall & Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: Perceptions of New Worlds in the Age of Enlightenment, Harvard University Press, 1982, p.19.*
104. Ainslie Thomas Embree, *Charles Grant and British Rule in India, New York, 1962, pp. 118-120.*
105. Quoted in M.A. Laird, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal*: 1793-1837, Oxford, 1972, p.67.

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English language and Anglo- European learning, the revival of Sanskrit education, liberalism and philosophical studies raised more and more questions causing excitement and consternation in a basically tradition bound Hindu society. While the society of the Hindus expected material benefit from the Company-government, it had to weather as well the coming of European ideas and idiosyncrasies in Calcutta. This, in fact, gave Calcutta a unique place in the history of the nineteenth century India. The clash, whether subdued or loud, between the traditional India and the dynamic, mercantile or colonial England in the sphere of ideas, religions and customs and usages was most pronounced in Calcutta. Madras and Bombay, the two other Presidencies, also responded to English language and ideas in their own way, yet they were not as vocal as Calcutta was.[106]

In the growing metropolitan city of Calcutta there was a craze for learning English. Boys were found running behind the missionaries asking for opportunities to learn English. The Christian missionaries were already in Bengal to teach English through the Bible. The Hindus of Calcutta established their own Hindu College for the education of their children in English language and western sciences. All these developments heralded changes in the society - in some cases they were perceptible but in most of the cases they were only debates upon change.

The carriers of the changes were close Indo-British contact, the British missionaries and the phenomenon of Raja Rammohun Roy. English officials like J.D. Colebrook, C.E. Trevelyan and J.T. Metcalfe wrote from Delhi on the 14th April 1830 to H.H. Wilson in Calcutta that the Indians in the pursuit of the English language and literature and in following English liberal institutions would cease "to desire or to seek independence after their former fashion which they will forget, acquiring in its place a sort of national character which may be denominated anglo-Indian."[107] They also pointed out that "the association of all castes, Christians, Mahomedan, and Hindoos in the same schools and colleges will tend rapidly to diminish...the ungenial and pernicious influence of those communal distinctions and to amalgamate all classes into one great and united whole..."[108] A contemporary liberal

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106. R. Suntharalingam, *Politics and Nationalist Awakening in South India*, 1852-1891, Delhi, 1980, pp.7,52, 60; Ravinder Kumar, *Western India in the Nineteenth century: A Study in the Social History of Maharashtra*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, p.56.

107. *General Committee of Public Instruction* (hereinafter GCPI): *Correspondence and Proceedings: Copy book of letters received and issued by the Committee*: 1st January-31st December 1830, pp. 543-561.

108. *Ibid.*

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periodical very straightly concluded that the English educated Indians would ultimately embrace Christianity, which would be welcome as the substantive proof of victory of reason over Indian dogmatism and tradition. It would also call it "the triumph of truth over ignorance, of reason over blind superstition."[109] Raja Rammohun Roy believed that "the greater the intercourse with European gentleman the greater will be our improvement in literacy, social and political affairs."[110] He told in London in 1831 that "the inhabitants of the cities, towns or stations, who have much intercourse with foreigners...in a different state of civilization generally imbibe their habits and opinions...and will in the course of time most probably approximate very nearly to them."[111] In fact, all the Indian supporters of free-trade and settlement of Europeans in India believed that these would usher in an unprecedented development of India. It was asserted that the progress of education among the Hindus of Calcutta would prove `the anchor' of English hopes for the improvement of India, and "would with colonization from home (England), will in the course of another century, raise India to a rank among the nations of the earth, which she has never before attained."[112]

The effects of English education imparted in the Hindu College (founded by the Hindus of Calcutta on 20 January 1817) were becoming real in the Hindu society of Calcutta. Though H.H. Wilson as the Visitor of College could not appreciate its standard of education in 1825, he, nevertheless, spoke of 'very respectable proficiency' of the students in the English language, Geography, Natural and Experimental philosophy.[113] With the appointment of Henry L.V. Derozio as a teacher of the Hindu College on 13 May 1826 and his excellent method of teaching a spirit of enquiry among his students in particular and the Hindu collegians in general became endemic. It was estimated that more than 2000 boys by virtue of their English education had undergons a complete change in their outlook; superstition was "vanishing from their minds."[114] In fact, the insular conservative Bengali society was ruptured by the English impact. Honoria Lawrence had described the students of the Hindu College as Deists "though they

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109. *India Gazette*, quoted in *The Calcutta Courier*, July 19, 1838.
110. *Bengal Hurkarh*, 16 December 1829, quoted in A.F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas, and Social Change in Bengal*, 1818-1836, Calcutta, June 1976, p.10.
111. Susobhan Chandra Sarkar (ed.), *Rammohun Roy on Indian Economy*, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 63-68.
112. *Calcutta Journal*, October 20, 1820, quoted in Satyajit Das (ed.), *Selections from the Indian Journals*, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1965, p.420.
113. GCPI: 1st January - 18th July 1825.
114. *The India Gazette*, 10 September 1831, quoted in Benoy Ghose (ed.), *Selections from the English Periodicals of 18th century Bengal*, Vol.I: 1815-1835, Calcutta, 1978, p.38.

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nominally continue to be Hindoos."[115] However, there gathered around Derozio a group of Bengali radicals, known as Young Bengal, like Krishnamohun Bannerjee, Rasikkrishna Mallik, Ramgopal Ghosh, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee *et al* who declared themselves against superstition, Hindu religion, caste distinctions, idol worship and Brahminism. Their journals, the *Enquirer* and the *Jnananveshan* manifested their spirit of enquiry, challenge and change. Some of them even embraced christianity synchronizing thought with action. An English educated Hindu youth wrote anonymously to the editor of the *India Gazette* that the Young Bengal by attacking Hinduism had been drawing sympathetic attention of the European community in India. But the Hindu youngman reminded the Young Bengal that "if the declarations of a few individual could produce such effect as to cause the destruction of so ancient a religion as Hinduism, it is a matter of surprise to see Christianity still in existence, when one takes into consideration the attacks which she has frequently received from such designing men as Paine, Voltaire, Bolingbroke, Hume, Palmer, Brillie, & c."[116] The Hindu youngman appealed to the Young Bengal that if they found any absurdity in Hinduism, they would try to reform it. He asked them, "why should you throw away the wheat with the chaff."[117]

Rammohun Roy was much sure about the beneficial effects of the Western impact on the youth who had been exposed to it through English education. He feared the religious opinions of English educated youth were shaken "without any other principles being implanted to their place."[118] Rammohun Roy apprehended that due to some irrational exposure to western ideas and Christian religion the students of the Hindu College might turn to be immoral and characterless. Though he himself was no believer in the Hindu religion of caste distinctions and image- worship, he propagated the Hindu religion of one God and without caste restrictions. He believed that the traditional Hindu religion might forestall the progress of India under the English India Company. Rommohun Roy might have expected that his Vedantic Brahmo Sabha would give the Hindus a protective shield against sproselytization of the Christian missionaries. His creative socio-religious ideas were institutionalized in *Atmiya Sabha* (1815), the Unitarian Committee (1821), the Vedanta College (1825) and the Brahmo Sabha (1828), and they were meant for the regeneration of the Hindu mind.

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115. John Lawrence & Audrey Woodwise (ed.), *The Journal of Honoria Lawrence: India observed* 1837-1854, Hodder & Stoughton, 1980, p.46.
116. *India Gazette*, 19 December 1831, quoted in Benoy Ghose (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 88-89.
117. *Ibid.*
118. Susobhan Chandra Sarkar (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 63-68.

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The Young Bengal or the Derozians were, however, critical of Rammohun Roy and his followers. The conservative Hindus were considered strangers in the changing milieu of the 19th century Bengal. Krishnamohun Bannerji condemned Rammohun's followers as opportunists who sought only position and money-power in their life. He said, "before the bigots they (the followers of Rammohun) are bigots; before the liberals they are liberals; before the Whigs they are whigs; and before the Tories they are Tories."[119] However critical the Derozians were of Rammohun Roy and his followers both the parties were hopeful of gradual improvement and progress of India under the British who exposed the Indians to the syndrome of western contact. The conservative Hindus, on the other hand, were more or less critical of the social consequences of English education. The mouth piece[120] of the conservative Hindus drew up a grim picture of the result of English education which only taught the youth not to pay regards to their parents and Hindu religion and to abjure traditional rites and rituals. English education, moreover, had been creating in them extra-Indian allegiance in all spheres of life. It also pointed out that English education did not necessarily make a Hindu denounce idol worship. It mentioned, for example, that Prasanna Kumar Tagore and Bholanath sen of the *Reformer*, Kalinath Munshi and Dwarkanath Tagore, friends and followers of Rammohun Roy, did not renounce image worship though they were all English educated. In fact, Prasamna Kumar Tagore, the liberal reformer, was proud of his Brahmanism.[121]

The conservative Hindus in an age of change around them were becoming particularly concerned about perpetuation of some traditional Hindu social customs and rituals. Idol worship, Brahminism, caste distinctions, restricted social relations with the English and the Muslims and abstinence from meat and wine were expected from those who were Hindus by birth. They could not, however, ignore the immediate dominant political and economic reality shaped by the English. They decided to make the best use of English sponsored education and economy. But as the liberals were broadly divided into two groups, namely the Young Bengal and the Brahmo Samaj, the conservative Hindus were likewise split into two factions - one of them was led by the editor of the *Samachar Chandrika*, Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay and other by Radhakanta Deb and Ramkamal Sen. While Radhakanta was a supporter and promoter of female education, Bhabani

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119. A.F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p. 49.
120. *Samachar Chandrika*, 30 April 1831 and 22 October 1831, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, 1830-1840, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1356 BS, pp. 14, 240-41.
121. Bipinbehari Gupta, *Puratan Prasanga*, Calcutta, 1373 BS, p.179.

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Charan could never support it.[122] And, while Radhakanta and Bhaban Charan were both supporters of the custom of *sati*, Ramkamal Sen told in a meeting of the *Dharma Sabha* of the conservative Hindus that the custom of *sati* had earned India bad reputation in the world.[123] Conservative Brahmin as Bhabani Charan was, he doubted whether Vaishnava *shudra gurus* could command reverence from Brahmins,[124] but he, on the other hand, did not demur to the leadership of moneyed non-Brahmins like Radhakanta or Ashutosh Deb in the society.[125]

Inspite of some difference of opinion among the conservative Hindus they were all opposed to Rammohun Roy for his liberal ideas. They were also hostile to the Young Bengal. The conservative Hindus led by Radhakanta unitedly protested against the Regulation of XVII of 4 December 1829, which made the custom of *sati* illegal; they also institutionalised their protest in a *Dharma Sabha* Radhakanta also took the lead in protesting against the Act which made the Indian Christians authorised to succeed to their inheritance when their fathers died intestate. He was also opposed to the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856. Radhakanta almost planned the dismissal of Derozio from the Hindu College as he was a radical thinker. He could neither accept un-Hindu social activities of Krishnamohum Bannerjee, and Rasik Krishna Mallik. Rammohun's case for religious reform advocating monotheism and obliteration of caste distinction angered the conservative Hindus. Neverthèless, Radhakanta was absolved of any rabid obscurantism because he supported female and promoted popular education. He worked with liberals like Ramgopal Ghosh and Debendranath Tagore in their fight against Christian proselytization and for political rights under the British. It was significant that Radhakanta headed two mutually different institutions in his lifetime - one was *Dharma Sabha* of the conservative Hindus and the other British Indian Association, a political forum of the liberals. It is suggested that Radhakanta had been adjusting himself to some of the changes brought forth by the English colonial rule, but he remained stuck to his own Hindu moorings and went to Brindaban, a holy place for the Hindus, to internalize *Vaisnava* Hindu ideals and breathed his last there. While in Brindaban Radhakanta wrote a few autobiographical couplets in Sanskrit stating that with the passage of time he had grown in age and lost peace of mind. It was only in Brindaban that he could feel tranquility.

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122. Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, 1830-1840, pp.92-93.
123. Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp. 233-34.
124. S.N. Mukherjee, *op.cit.*, p.77.
125. *Samachar Chandrika*, 19 September 1831 and 5 January 1833, quoted in Brajendranth Bandopadhyay (ed.), *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp. 181-82, 271-74.

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He wrote that he was satiated, and found equilibrium of mind. Radhakanta felt that his spiritual mission in this world would be fulfilled if he could die in Brindaban[126] where indeed he died in 1867.

126. *Somprokash*, Vol.9, No.24, 17 Baisakh, 1274 BS., 29 April 1867, p. 373; Microfilm Reel No.14, National Library, Calcutta.

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2

QUEST OF SECULAR KNOWLEDGE BY A CONSERVATIVE HINDU

A. Radhakanta Deb's Intellectual Achievements

The year 1784 in which Radhakanta was born is also memorable as it was the year of the establishment of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta by William Jones. Those were the times of 'British Orientalism' as Daivid Kopf calls it,[1] when the British colonialists were accumulating knowledge "about the history of India, its system of thoughts, its religious beliefs and practices and its society and institutions." It was understandable that the British in order to know India better for their colonial purposes would prepare a cognitive inventory of India. A Company *sahib* - T.H. Maddock wrote in 1843 that their "Government has been and is in many particulars defective, but whatever defects have attended...all must be ascribed to our imperfect knowledge of the feelings and wants of the people. But our knowledge, it may be hoped, is every day increasing."[2] The Asiatic Society indeed as an institution systematized the technicalities and methods of collating and processing information about India.

Information storage and its dissemination by the Asiatic Society inspired educated Bengalis in Calcutta[3] to establish learned institutions which were to popularize new ideas and institutionalize information and knowledge of their own country and society. The *Atmiya Sabha* (1815)

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1. David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization* 1773-1835, Calcutta, 1969, *Passim.*
2. Bernard S. Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 182; also Bernard S. Cohn, "The Command of Language and the Language of Command" in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: Writing on South Asian History and Society*, Delhi, 1985, pp. 276-329.
3. S.N. Mukherjee, "Gaurlya Samaj a literary society of the bhadralok of Calcutta", in S.N. Mukherjee (Ed.), *India: Historya and Thought: Essays in honour of A.L. Basham*, Calcutta, 1982, pp. 139-173.

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founded by Rammohun Roy was a society of his associates who believed in one God and started propagating the message of the Vedanta. In 1823 was established the *Gauriya Samaj*. Its eight point manifesto stipulated that the *Samaj* would translate informative books of all languages into Bengali, fight against superstition and publish tracts on moral values in Bengali and English, and collect books on European science and technology. Radhakanta Deb was one of the organisers of the *Gauriys Samaj*; and celebrities like Dwarkanath Tagore, Gourmohun Vidyalankar, Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Tarachand Chakraborty, Ram Kamal Sen, Ramdulal De, Rasamoy Datta, Lakshminarayan Mukherjee, etc. also joined it.[4] The Gauriya Samaj while drawing their programme of activities paid a glowing tribute to the Indian tradition of knowledge and wisdom of *siksha, kalpa, vyakaran, Nirukta, jyotish, natak, chhanda, mimamsa, naya, Dharmashastras, puranas, Ayurveda*, the sixty four arts and eighteen languages, and lamented their gradual decline. The *Samaj* emphasized that the subordinate status of the Indians under the British and the ignorance of their past heritage would only degenerate them further unless the people were made aware of their rich past.[5]

Institutionalization of knowledge and information became in the 19th century one of the most important activities of the elite of Calcutta. There was a spurt in the publication of newspapers and periodicals, books, tracts and dictionaries. Learned Societies were also established to organize discourses on various subjects. While newspapers and periodicals supplied contemporary news of all sorts, books and tracts dealt with subjects from religion to atheism, Chemistry to Geography, and the history of India to the history of the world and so on. Compilation of moral tales from different languages had been one of the most popular literary activities of the elite. Tarinicharan Mitra (C. 1772- C. 1837) besides translating in 1803 the Aesop's Fables into Bengali, Persian and Hindi wrote along with Ram Kamal Sen and Radhakanta Deb Nitikatha (April 1818). This Bengali book was a translation of English and Arabic moral tales, and it was published by the Calcutta School Book Society. The Nitikatha compiled by three early conservative Hindus of Calcutta was divided into three parts. The first part contained Bengali alphabets, spelling and a graphic description of Hindu castes like Brahmins, kayasthas, and other touchables and untouchables among the Hindus. Some of the tales narrated ended with the moral that knowledge could be acquired in any age of one's life, and that men did not

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4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

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become wise in age but by knowledge.[6] Ram Kamal Sen, a close associate of Radhakanta compiled Hitopadesh. It was published in 1820 from Srirampur.[7] Hitopadesh seemed to be one of the most favorite subjects with the contemporaries of Radhakanta. Ramkishore Tarkachudamani (died 1819) of Fort William College, Mrityunjoy Vidyalankar (1762-1819), and Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay wrote Hitopadesh signifying popular demand of moral tales. Bhabani Charan had also exposed the idle, volatile and immoral segment of the Bengali society in his creative writing like Nababa-bubilas (1825), Nababibibilas (1831?), Kalikata Kamalalaya (1823) and Dutibilas (1825). Nilratan Halder (died 1855) compiled Bahudarshan (1826) from different languages emphasizing correct social behavior and morals. While Nitidarshan of Ramchandra Vidyabagish (1786-1845) was published in 1841, Nitiratna of Gourishankar Tarkabagish (1799-1859) was printed in 1854. Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan (1819-1856) wrote three volumes of Nitisar published in 1856 and 1878.[8] There were thus a good number of books on moral tales and virtues in the 19th century.

Radhakanta following the pattern of Fort William College and being sponsored by the Calcutta School Book Society wrote text books in Bengali for the schools run by the Calcutta School Society. The books were designed to make the school going boys knowledgeable. One such text book, Bangla Shiksagrantha was published in 1820. It contained 288 pages and its contents covered subjects like history, geography, arithmetic and geometry. Its abridged edition was published in 1827. The Bangla Shiksagrantha was acclaimed by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, and it was also considered a model for such books in Bengali.[9] The seasons described in the text book may perhaps made one guess that Radhakanta drew much from the great Sanskrit poet, Kalidas in his description and style. In describing winter season Radhakanta wrote, "as greed of a poor man gets attracted by the plenty of wealth so also smokeless fire allures a man for its warmth."[10] There were other Bengali books published in the 19th century for imparting rudimentary education to the children. some of them were Shiksasar (2nd impression in 1818) by Joygopal Tarkalankar (1775-1846), Shishusiksa (1st, 2nd and 3rd parts) published in 1849-1850 by

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6. Khagendranath Mitra, *Satabdir Shishu Sahitya*, 1818-1918, Calcutta, 1958, pp. 76-78.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala*, Vol.I,II,III,IV, Calcutta, *Sansad Bengali Charitabhidan*, Nirmal Sinha (ed.), *Freedom movement in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1968.
9. *A Rapid Sketch*, p.20; *Mookerjee's Magazine*, No.IV, May 1861, p.244.
10. Khagendranath Mitra, *op.cit.*, pp. 87-88.

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Madanmohun Tarkalankar (1817-1858) and Barnaparichaya (1st and 2nd parts) published in 1855 by Iswarchandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891).

Dissemination of information on various subjects through vernaculars had been a passion with both the missionaries of Srirampur and the educated Indians. Dig Darshan (published in 1818) by Joshua Marshman had been informing its readers, particularly the Hindu collegians, of the land marks of European history. Compilation of dictionaries had remained another most popular learned occupation of the educated Bengalis. Mohun Prasad Thakur wrote A Vocabulary: Bengalee and English in 1810, while William Carey (1761-1834) published his Bengali-English dictionary in 1815. Ram Kamal Sen compiled in 17 years from 1817 an English-Bengali dictionary in two volumes.[11] Radhakanta was himself a lexicographer. He completed Sabdakalpadruma in 8 volumes including the appendix in forty years. Its first volume was published in 1822 and the last one in 1858. The unique characteristic of the Sabdakalpadruma was that it was composed in prose, while most of the traditional Sanskrit dictionaries were in verse. Radhakanta arranged the entries of the Sabdakalpadruma alphabetically after English dictionaries, and explained them in Bengali. In compiling his eight-volume dictionary Radhakanta consulted the following Sanskrit books and authors like Medini, Biiswaprakash, Tricandasesh, Harabala, Bhuriprayog, Sabdaratnabali, Sabdamala, Halayudh, Dharani, Hemchandra, Anadikosh, Sushrut, Baidyaparivasa, Ratnamala, Jyotishtatta, Lilabati, Vedantasar, Tantrasar, Vyakaran, Siddhanta, Kaumudi, Rasamanjari, and the Puranas, Smritis, and alankaras. The Sabdakalpadruma not only gave the meaning and roots of various words, but explained various terms as well. Following the pattern of an English encyclopaedia Radhakanta also defined and described scientific terms in great details. A good number of diseases were discussed pointing out their causes and symptoms. There were entries on Hindu law and customs. He took about 162 pages in explaining prayaschitta. He also defined ashauch (the state of impurity caused by not adhering to Hindu social rituals and customs) in some details. The Hindu law of inheritance was analysed mentioning few decisions on division of Inheritance.[12]

In 1851 when Radhakanta had almost completed the Sabdakal-

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11. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Ram Kamal Sen: Krishnamohun Bandopadhyay, Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala*, No.72, Calcutta, 1362 B.S., pp. 26-27.

12. *Sabdakalpadruma* (in 5 volumes), Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, not dated; *A Rapid Sketch*, Appendix; *The Second Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedings, Appendix IX*, Calcutta, 1819.

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padruma he wrote to Max Muller, "when I ventured to assume the character of a Lexicographer, my most ambitious wish was but to revive the study of Sanskrit in my own country where it has been on the decline."[13] Radhakanta in 1833 informed the Government of British India that the model he followed in the compilation had been the Encyclopaedia Britannica.[14] He informed Max Muller, "I have devoted the greatest portion of my life and no inconsiderable amount of labour and expense to the execution of the work and though as an Encyclopaedist I have no claims to orginality or to the merits of a genius yet I trust my industry and application will at least be applauded when I may be considered as an humble pioneer of Sanskrit learning."[15] The government of British India appreciated Radhakanta for his labour to complete and publish Sabdakalpadruma.[16] Dr. Charles Lassen, Professor of Sanskrit literature in Bonn, wrote him, on 7 August 1852, that the Sabdakalpadruma would remain a treasure of information of Indian religion, science, arts, and geography.[17] Other contemporary European Indologists like Dr. Herman Brockhans of the University of Leipzig, Eugene Burnouf of France and Sir Alexander Johnston of the Royal Asiatic Society of Britain thanked Radhakanta for his monumental work on Sanskrit knowledge.[18] Radhakanta also received felicitations from Frederick VII, King of Denmark, Queen Victoria and Frederick William IV of Prussia for the Sabdakalpadruma.[19]

In the first four decades of the 19th century when Radhakanta had

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13. Radhakanta to Max Muller dated 18 November 1851, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, "Raja Radhakaanta Deb on the reactionary attitude of the Europeans in India and the revival of Sanskrit learning", *The Modern Review*, Vol.LXXII, No.2, August 1942, pp. 157-60.
14. Radhakanta to Macnaghten (Secretary to the Government), dated 9 November 1833, quoted in Brajendranath Banerji, "Rajah Radhakanta Deb's services to the country", *Indian Historical Recordes Commission Proceedings*, Vol.IX, December 1926, pp. 107-8.
15. Radhakanta to Max Muller, dated 18 November 1851, in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *op.cit.*
16. *A Rapid Sketch*, p. XXXVI.
17. *Ibid*, p. LXVI.
18. *Ibid*, pp. I-LIX.
19. *Ibid*. At home in Bengal the famous author of *Nil Darpan*, Dinabandhu Mitra (1830-1875) paid a tribute to the literary creativity of Radhakanta Deb in verse in his *Suradhuni Kavya*. He wrote that Radhakanta Deb in spite of being a rich man and zamindar devoted his life for the promotion of education and writing *Sabdakalpadruma*.

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been compiling as well as publishing the Sabdakalpadruma, some European countries had become renowned for Indological studies. Sanskrit studies were especially developed in Germany. Friedrick and August Wilhelm Schlegal were its pioneers. In 1803 Friedrick Schlegal wrote about Sanskrit: "Herein is the source of all languages, all without exception come from India, I have been looking at everything quite differently since I gained access to this source."[20] With Schlegal and his brother, August-Wilhelm a new branch of studies, Comparative Linguistics started. The theory of Indo-European family of languages was also conceived during those times. The success of comparative linguistics gave rise to comparative ethnology in the middle of the 19th century. Radhakanta had been following with keen interest the progress of Sanskrit studies in Europe. He stated on 26 November 1859 that "the cultivation of (Sanskrit) in Europe has excited a general interest; it serves as a key to the critical study of the largest family of languages, it has formed a new era in philology; it has opened dark vistas of Antiquity and contributed to the establishment of great Ethnographical facts."[21] Radhhakanta wrote H.H. Wilson a letter expressing his satisfaction that the Indo-Germanic nations "claim a cognate origin with the Hindus". He was happy that many European scholars like "the historian, the philosopher and the antiquarian, the man of science and the lover of fine parts are equally interested in gaining a mastery of this gigantic language, Sanskrit."[22] Lenz, a Soviet Indologist, reviewed Radhakanta's Sabdakalpadruma very passionately.[23] In India where Bengali script was not known the Sabdakalpadruma in Nagri script was much in demand. Raja Jayakrishna Dass, the Secretary to the Aligarh Scientific Society enquired, in 1868, whether the Sabdakalpadruma was available in the Nagri script. He was informed from Jhamapukur Lane in Calcutta that the lexicon was also printed in that script with further additions and corrections. The volumes would be of much value for the scientific society at Aligarh.[24]

Radhakanta was also a deep Persian scholar. He translated a

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20. G. Bongard - Levin and A. Vigasin, *The Image of India: the study of Ancient Indian civilization in the USSR*, Moscow, 1984, p.60.
21. *A Rapid Sketch*, pp.4-6; *Home - Public*, 18 Februɛ:y 1859, Nos. 53-54.
22. Radhakanta to H.H. Wilson, dated 7 October 1851, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, "Some unpublished letters of Raja Radhakanta Deb", *The Sunday Hindusthan Standard*, August 26, 1945.
23. G. Bongard - Levin and A. Vigasin, *op.cit.*, p. 67.
24. Atma Chandra Ghosh to Raja Jayakrishna Dass, dated 30 October 1868, quoted in Yusuf Husain (ed.), *Selected Documents from the Aligarh Archives*, Asia Publishing House, 1967, p.86.

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Persian book on horticulture into English. The book was about plants and flowers. Some of the interesting aspects of the book were about extracting perfume and changing colours in flowers. In this book there were informations about plant physiology and diseases, lucky and unlucky trees, and how a cucumber might be produced like a pumkin.[25] Sadi, the Sufi poet was favourite to Radhakanta as he was to Debendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath. Radhakanta also composed devotional lyrics in Bengali when he was living in Brindaban, which were occassionally sung by Vaisnava devotees. Radhakanta's contribution towards institutionalization of agricultural information about India proved to be very substantive. In 1821 he contributed a paper to the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India on the agriculture of the district of 24-Parganas. He first described the climate of the district, which "is damp... From the Bengali months of Phalgoon to Asarha, the air and water are saline, and from Sravana to Magha, not impregnated with salt."[26] While pointing out the nature of the soil Radhakanta wrote that the surface of the soil of some places "is argillaceous, and below the surface calcareous, and that of other places sandy with a stratum of muddy alluvium beneath it."[27] He also mentioned that the agricultural productions of the district were moderate. The peasant "dispose of the produce in the interior, and dealers carry the same to town... by water carriage, but there is a facility of land carriage too from the interior"[28] of 24-Parganas to Calcutta.

Radhakanta gave an account of the rent and other burdens that the cultivators of the district were to bear. He wrote, "the rent for rice-land is from 8 annas per biga, for the upland from 1 1/2 to 1 3/4, and for a homestead 2 or 2 1/2 rupees."[29] The other burdens were pole tax, a tax for worship at the full and new moon, presents made at weddings, etc.[30] Regarding agricultural implements Radhakanta wrote that "the usual implements used in husbandry are the langul or plough, kadalee or digging hoe, the niranee or weeding instrument, bida or rake, the mooi or harrow, kastya, or sickle, & c." He further informed that, "No attempts have been made to improve those in common use or to introduce others more effectual", but he was sure that if cheaf and good implements were introduced, all the cultivators would

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25. *Miscellaneous Transactions from Oriental languages*, Vol.II, London 1834, pp. 3-31.
26. *Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India*, Vol.I, Calcutta, 1837, pp. 22-27.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*

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accept them without any hesitation.[31] Radhakanta concluded his paper suggesting that the collectors of land revenue, the indigo planters, botanists, zamindars and the former kanungoes would initiate plans for the betterment of the district. Radhakanta also proposed that books and papers on agricultural improvement written in Sanskrit, Persian and English languages might be thoroughly read and translated into vernacular languages.[32]

Radhakanta in 1833 wrote a paper "On the culture of paddy in twenty different districts" for the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India. The districts covered were Burdwan, Rajshahi, Dinajapur, Krishnagar, Purnia, Rangpur, 24- Parganas, Birbhum, Murshidabad, Jessore, Jalalpur, Mymensing, Rajmahal, Chittagong, Hijli, Azimabad, Midnapur, Calcutta, Ramgarh and Sylhet. It was contended that sixteen varieties of ashoo and sixtyeight species of aman paddy were cultivated in the district of 24-Parganas. The number of species of boro paddy grown in the district of Dacca was eight, while that of ashoo paddy was twentyeight.[33] Radhakanta contributed as well a paper "On the Bair or Ber tree."[34] He wrote, "according to medical work `Bhava Pracasa' Bar is good for bloody effections, consumption and thirst. When dried in the solar heat it is stimulant, light, and removes fatigue."[35] It was informed that Ber tree was introduced in Calcutta by one of the friends of Gopimohun Deb in 1784.[36] In 1830 he wrote a paper "On the cultivation of cotton and tobacco in Central India." He contended that, "the Siam silky cottons, and those of America and the West Indies are celebrated; but as India has had but a limited share of science for many centuries it is not improbable that European experience will much contribute to the improvement, not only of the species by foreign introductions, but by its wonted sagacity, the methods of culture; taking so much from the native process adopted in this country as will serve the object of science."[37] Radhakanta was one of the Vice-Presidents of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India founded by Wiliam Carey in 1820. The celebrated Botanist Dr. N. Walich was also one of the four Vice-Presidents of the Society. Radhakanta had been, as well, one of the members of its

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31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Transactions of the Agricultural and Hosticultural Society of India*, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1838, pp. 231-244.
34. *Ibid*, pp. 1-5.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid*, pp. 67-72.

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Committee for `Implements of Husbandry and Machinery', Ram Kamal Sen and David Hare were among the nine members of this Committee.[38]

William Carey once remarked in 1828 that the Indian farmers would have to use "European plough and the harrow, the scythe and the sickle, the fork and the rake..and a great number of other desirable implements" to improve agricultural production in India.[39] He commented that "the improvement of implement of husbandry has occupied the attraction of some of the first mechanics in Europe, in countries where previous to those improvements, the meanest implement far surpassed the best which is to be found in India."[40] Radhakanta felt the necessity of introducing improved quality of agricultural implements in India, but they were to be cheap and effective for Indian condition.[41]

William Bentinck appointed Radhakanta a member of the Tea Committee established on 1 February 1834. Ram Kamal Sen was the other Indian member of this 12-member Committee. The Committee was to enquire, "Is Tea capable of being introduced and cultivated in Hindusthan for extensive commercial purposes?"[42] The Committee, after a detailed enquiry, was hopeful of a profitable business in tea.[43] Radhakanta wrote Edward Hyde East, "... we know that the tea does not exist and grow perfectly wild in Upper Assam... we have natural forests ready prepared for our experiments and Dr. Wallich (the great Botanist) says that he may willingly agree to stake any credit he may boast of possessing in matters of Botany and Agriculture that a good saleable and profitable tea will be produced from our Assam forests and that patience and perseverance will enable us to compete with China in respect to the superior sorts of the great and invaluable comfort of life."[44]

During the life time of Radhakanta there emerged at least 50 institutions in and around Calcutta, which were meant for storage and

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38. *Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India*, Calcutta, 1840, pp. 5-6.
39. *Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India*, Vol.I, *op.cit.*, p. iv.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid*, p.22.
42. Radhakanta to Edward Hyde East, dated 22 June 1836, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, "Some unpublished letters of Raja Radhakanta Deb", *op.cit.*
43. *Home-Revenue*, Consultation No.6, 13 March 1835, Consultation No.2, 23 May 1836.
44. Radhakanta to Edward Hyde East, dated 22 June 1836.

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dissemination of useful knowledge to the people.[45] The literary institution with which Radhakanta was associated in his old age was the Vernacular Translation Society established in 1851. Its most ambitious programme was to translate books of useful knowledge into Bengali. All the attempts to cultivate knowledge and to spread it point out the seriousness of the elite of Bengal to utilise for the benefit of the people the information explosion brought forth by the British. It also necessitated a different education system synthesizing English and Indian knowledge and mode of transmission to the people. Radhakanta was actively associated with the educational programme sponsored by the British. But while his concern had been the practical and material benefit of the people, the British went ahead with their own colonial interests.

B. Radhakanta Deb's Involvements in Educational Programme

1. Elementary Education:

The concern of the English East India Company for imparting useful knowledge to the people of India became apparent when they were at the helm of political and economic affairs. W. Fraser, 2nd Member of the Board of Revenue, Delhi district, spelt out an essentially colonial education policy. He wrote that "the boys should understand from being able to read and write, something of the British Judicial and Revenue system to the purpose of a diffusion of information amongst the mass, with which the individuals are identified."[46] Though any sort of mass education at the grass root level was not accepted by the Company due, primarily, to the paucity of funds, yet some enthusiastic officials of the Company opened schools for imparting education to the Indian boys. The Company officials had been expressing their ideas of useful education since, particularly, the passing of the Act of 1813. Section 43 of the Act of 1813 stipulated that "it shall be lawful for the Governor-General in Council to direct that out of any surplus which may remain of the rents, revenues, and profits arising from the territorial acquisitions, after defraying the expenses of the military, civil, and commercial establishments, and paying the interest of the debt, in manner hereinafter provided, a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the

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45. Rajat Sanyal, *Voluntary Associations and the Urban public life in Bengal* (1815-1876): *An aspect of Social History*, Calcutta, 1980, pp. 244-49.

46. W. Fraser to the Chief Secretary, dated 25 September 1823, quoted in H. Sharp, *Selections from Educational Records*, Part I: 1781-1839, Calcutta 1920, p.13.

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encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India..."[47] Lord Moira suggested that any promotion of science-education in India would have to be preceded by a sound elementary education.[48]

The efforts of the Company in the eighteenth century and earlier decades of the 19th century had been the promotion of Sanskrit and Arabic learning. The Christian missionaries, on the other hand, had contributed much towards systematizing the elementary education. The Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society were established in the 2nd decade of the 19th Century for the diffusion of useful elementary knowledge and the establishment of indigenous schools throughout the country. it was mainly owing to the British patronage that primary education in Calcutta achieved some respectability. In this sphere Radhakanta, Radhamadhab Bandopadhyay (1779-1852) and Rasamoy Datta (1779-1854) extended their wholehearted cooperation to the British. It was not that any system of primary education was conspicuous by its absence, vernacular primary education was actually catered for in the pathsalas[49] where reading, writing, arithmetic, accounts and some religious literature were taught. William Adam thought the syllabi for the primary schools were well adopted for the socio-economic requirements of the early 19th century Bengal. He, however, found the primary educational system incapable of freeing the minds of the pupils from superstition.[50] In 1822 William Ward, a Christian missionary, described the Bengali pathsala a shop "in which by a certain process the human being is prepared to act a copying machine, or as a lythographic process. The culture of the mind is never contemplated in their seminaries".[51] W.H. Pearce, one of the secretaries of the Calcutta School Society, wrote in 1819 that education imparted in the pathsalas was extremely deplorable, and the teaching of arithmetic was particularly bad. In most of the pathsalas reading was not practised properly; the students "acquire a most vitiated manner of spelling", knowledge of the sciences and

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47. *Ibid*, p.22.
48 *Ibid*, p.28.
49 Radhakanta in his letter to E.S. Montagu, dated 8 June 1819, defined *pathsala* as 'Native School' or 'Indigenous School'. *Report of the Calcutta School Society*: 13th April 1819 - January 1833, MSS (hereinafter RCSS, MSS).
50. Anathnath Basu (ed.), W.Adam's *Reports on the state of Education in Bengal*, 1835 & 1838, University of Calcutta, 1941, pp. 142-45, 242.
51. M.A. Laird, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

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lessons in moral duties"[52] were not included in the syllabus. Englishmen, whether missionaries or others, agreed that the primary education was inadequate. They, however, spoke and implemented such an educational system that proved to be colonial and, also, Christian.

The society for promoting Christian knowledge and the Society for the propagation of the Gospel representing the High Church Wing of the Church of England had been undertaking, since the Charter Act of 1813, missionary and educational work in British India. A group of Christian missionaries were, however engaged in missionary activities in Serampur, a Danish enclave, since 1800.

In Calcutta in 1814, soon after the enactment of the Charter Act of 1813, the Company officials and missionaries felt the necessity of an institution that would support the existing pathsalas and establish new ones to encourage "moral and intellectual improvement" of the Indians.[53] The Marquis of Hastings (Earl of Moira) suggested on 2 October 1815 that suitable books and qualified teachers could only improve the standard of primary education. Hastings talked about reforming and remodelling the pathsalas.[54] With a view to implementing the plans and proposals of the Company-officials and the Governor- General the Calcutta School Book Society was founded on 1 July 1817. The primary objective of the Society was the "cheap or gratuitous supply of books useful in schools and seminaries of learning."[55] On the establishment of the Calcutta School Book Society it was subsequently resolved to constitute the Calcutta School Society which was formerly launched at public meeting held on 1 September 1818. J.H. Harington and Sir Edward Hyde East elaborated the programme of the Calcutta School Society and said that among other objectives the existing pathsalas needed immediate care and encouragement from the Calcutta School Society.[56] In fact, the Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society were two complementary institutions.

A 'Committee of Managers' was formed to execute the objectives

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52. W.H. Pearce to G. Forbes, dated 29 August 1819, quoted in *The Second Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedings*, Calcutta, 1819, pp. 88-89 (hereinafter *The Second Report*).
53. *The First Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedings*, Calcutta, 1818, p.23 (hereinafter *The First Report*).
54. *The Second Report.*
55. *The First Report.*
56. *The Second Report*, p.86.

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of the Calcutta School Society. The Committee consisted of twenty four members, of whom eight were Indians and Radhakanta was one of them.[57] In a meeting of the Committee held on 9 March 1819 it was decided that the School Society would pursue a threefold policy; appropriate sub-committees were also formed to implement them. The first sub-committee would help establish a limited number of regular model schools fully controlled and supported by the Calcutta School Society. The second sub-committee was to aid and improve "the indigenous schools...originated and supported by the Natives themselves."[58] The third sub-committee was to facilitate the learning of "English and higher branches of tuition."[59] W.H. Pearce stated on 29 August 1819 that the third sub-committee was not meant "to assume much magnitude or importance in the beginning; it, however, founded thirty scholarships at the Hindu College to encourage English education. The scholarships would be meant for those boys who would distinguish themselves in the indigenous schools or pathsalas.[60] The first, second and third sub- committees were assigned to E.S. Montagu, W.H. Pearce[61] and Francis Irvine respectively. Radhakanta was associated with the second sub-committee; he was also the Native Secretary to the Calcutta School Society.

The proceedings of both these Societies reveal that they had given the improvement of the pathsalas top priority. Gourmohun Vidyalankar, who was appointed the Pundit of the School Society, was asked to furnish a list of the pathsalas and their teachers, the gurus. The list thus prepared contained one hundred and sixty-six schools and the same number of gurus. Radhakanta, as the Native Secretary, issued a statement to the gurus pointing out the objective of the two Societies. He wrote, "at present the boys are not properly taught in Bengalee, and scarcely any of them can write correctly. Under...this consideration several respectable and learned Europeans and Natives have joined themselves together and established two institutions, the Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society"[62] to help them reform their schools. Radhakanta requested the teachers to teach their students the art of writing correctly and neatly. He announced that the gurus would get monetary incentives for their efforts to

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57. *The First Report*, p.26.
58. *The Second Report*, p.84.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. On the resignation of William Yates from the Committee of Managers W.H. Pearcewas elected a member of the said Committee. (Vide: *The Second Report*, p.87).
62. RCSS, MSS.

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teach their students efficiently, and asked them to collect books of the Calcutta School Book Society from his house. Initially, twenty-four teachers of the pathsalas, mostly situated in north-Calcutta, responded to the invitation by Radhakanta and called on him. They agreed to accept the guidance and help from the Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society.[63] It was not, however, an easy effort on the part of Radhakanta to convince the gurus of the innocuous offer of money and books from the Calcutta School Society as well as the Calcutta School Book Society. The gurus were told that any help from the two societies was not at all intended to desecrate their religious belief and practices. Contrary to the opinion of W.H. Pearce who suggested that the gurus would be given money if they were agreeable to use the books, charts and tables supplied by the Calcutta School Book Society, Radhakanta wrote "if money and books be given on the same day the gurus would perhaps consider the former as a bribe for accepting the latter, which would throw suspicion on our new books."[64] Radhakanta thought that the principle of monetary incentive to the teachers would be better linked with their performance in the schools. The progress of the students in their academic activities would be the only criterion for offering monthly monetary help to the teachers.[65] In order to evaluate the progress of the students of these teachers who had come under the supervision of the Calcutta School Society an examination was held on 25 May 1819. On the basis of their performance in the examination sixteen teachers and their fifty- nine students were rewarded, the former in money and the latter in books.[66]

By June 1819 the gurus of the pathsalas of Calcutta were responding quite positively to the plan of the Calcutta School Society by accepting books and other publications of the Calcutta School Book Society. They did not hesitate to repose their belief on the benevolent educational activities of Radhakanta. It was soon felt that Radhakanta could not alone supervise the training of the teachers and education of the students of the pathsalas. Moreover, a large number of the pathsalas were yet to be brought under the control of the two Societies. It was therefore decided that these pathsalas were to be divided into four divisions which would be supervised by four

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63. *Ibid.*
64. Radhakanta to W.H. Pearce, dated 20 May 1819, quoted in RCSS, MSS.
65. *Ibid.*
66. RCSS,MSS; *The Second Report*, p.90.

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superintendents.[67] Radhakanta himself took the responsibility of the fourth division - the largest one, where Muslim and low-caste Hindu students studied along with those of the high-caste Hindu community. It was also decided that the Superintendents would conduct examinations of the students of their respective Divisions three times a year. The students would be particularly examined in reading, writing and arithmetic.[68] Radhakanta on 9 June 1820 reported to W.H. Pearce on the progress of primary education in Calcutta. He wrote that twenty-eight new gurus had established the same number of pathsalas, and some of them were expected to come under the guidance and supervision of the Calcutta School Society.[69] The Societies could thus create an educational awareness among the local people of Calcutta. He did suggest as well that the Pundit of the Calcutta School Society might be requested to "explain the Teachers fully the contents of the Books they have received, particularly the use of the Bengalee grammar in order to enable them to teach their pupils to remove their ignorance which still exists."[70] Radhakanta further wrote that the publications of the Calcutta School Book Society "have universally been esteemed in the pathsalas", and moreover, there was a growing demand for books on "Book-keeping comprising a set of commercial and financial accounts" and "letters on various subjects, forms of petitions, deeds, vouchers, etc. etc."[71]

Within four years from the inception of the Calcutta School Society the standard of primary education available in the metropolis was so quantitatively Changed that the students were gradually getting interest in

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67. Division 1: Superintendent - Durga Charan Datta, Total Number of *Gurus* 29. Total number of scholars 885.

    Division 2: Superintendent - Ramchand Ghose, Total number of *gurus* 42. Total number of scholars 891.

    Division 3: Superintendent - Nandalal Thakur, Total number of *gurus* 36, Total number of scholars 576.

    Division 4: Superintendent - Radhakanta Deb, Total number of *gurus* 59, Total number of scholars 1133.
    (Source: RCSS, MSS).

68. *The Second Report*, p.92.

69. RCSS, MSS.

70. *Ibid.*

71. *Ibid.*

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a wide curriculum of "General Geography, with a particular account of the History and Geography of Hindoostan, and a description of the boundaries, population, principal towns, rivers, production of every zilla in Bengal."[72] There remained, however some hesitant gurus who would not acquiesce in the activities of the Calcutta School Society. Of one hundred and ninety four gurus only eighty-five accepted, by 1824, the patronage of the School Society.[73] There were, perhaps many conservative Hindus in Calcutta, who could not even take Radhakanta into confidence, though he was one of their acknowledged leaders. Radhakanta on his part did not consider this achievement, which was less than 50% of the total number of gurus in Calcutta, insignificant. He wrote David Hare a letter on 8 July 1824: "I have a great satisfaction in saying that our countrymen are convinced of the advantage derived by their children from our society, and that the indigenous school masters and the parents of boys who were alarmed and refused to receive our school books, are anxious to come under the control of the Society."[74] In spite of the hopeful note by Radhakanta and his active participation in the activities of the two Societies, and moreover, being a prominent conservative Hindu leader of Calcutta, some Hindus would still consider the Calcutta School Book and the Calcutta School Societies means of preaching Christianity among their people.[75] (Please see Table I) Radhakanta tried to make the Hindu believe that the two societies were no Christian missionary organisations. He was nevertheless aware of the proselytizing intentions of some of the members of the Calcutta School Book and the Calcutta School Societies. He objected, for example, on 16 December 1819, to the inclusion of the history of Daniel after the Book of Daniel of the Bible in one of the publications of the Calcutta School Society.[76] He might have guessed as well that several british laymen like William Butterworth Bayley (1782-1860)[77], J.H. Harington (1764- 1828)[78], Captain Francis Irvine[79] and Sir Edward Hyde East[80] were "all men of a definite

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72. Radhakanta to David Hare, dated 12 March 1822, in *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*
77. William Butterworth Bayley was the President of the Calcutta School Book Society from 1817 to 1830.
78. J.H. Harington was the Chairman of the inaugural meeting of the Calcutta School Society and also a member of its Committee.
79. Captain Francis Irvine was a Secretary to both the Calcutta School Book and the Calcutta School Societies.
80. Sir Edward Hyde East, the Chief Justice of Bengal from 1814 to 1822.

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Christian - in most cases Evangelical religious convictions (and) all of them shared with the missionaries the hope that their educational experiments would serve to prepare the people to accept Christianity".[81]

Table I

Gurus in 1820

Division	old Gurus	New Gurus	Total Gurus	Deserted Gurus	Examining Gurus
1st	22	2	31	9	22
2nd	42	18	60	11	60
3rd	36	1	37	3	34
4th	59	7	66	11	66
	1.4	2.2	2.9	3.6	4.3

	The Gurus whose scholar were examined	The Gurus whose scholars were not examined
1st	19	3
2nd	19	41
3rd	14	20
4th	32	34

	The Gurus who received Books	The Gurus who did not receive Books
1st	22	11
2nd	22	38
3rd	21	13
4th	41	25

81. M.A. Laird, *op.cit.*, p. 122.

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LIST OF THE SCHOLARS BELONGING TO THE PATHSALAS UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE CALCUTTA SCHOOL SOCIETY

Division	old scholars	New Scholars	Total Scholars	The Scholars of those Gurus who have received Books	Examined Scholars
1st	885	22	907	556	57
2nd	891	115	1046	750	57
3rd	576	Nil	576	400	42
4th	1133	155	1258	955	96

	Un-examined Scholars	The Scholars of those Gurus who have not received Books
1st	499	357
2nd	493	553
3rd	134	442
4th	859	399

Catain Francis Irvine, with whom Radhakanta was closely associated, was described by Bishop Middleton (the founder of the Bishop's College (Calcutta) as "a most zealous advocate for conversion"[82] of the Indians. But Christian missionaries like the Reverand Henry Townley who was a member of the Committee of Managers of the Calcutta School Society were overt spokesmen of proselytization through the Calcutta School Book and the Calcutta School Societies. Townley, in fact, "constantly voted against Natives being on the Committee (of the Calcutta School Society) lest they might be a check to favorable opportunities of introducing the Scriptures."[83] It was, however, clearly laid down in the prospectus of the Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society that there would be no religious instruction in the curriculum of the pathsalas.[84] There were other missionaries like the Reverand Dr. Carey and the Reverand Thomas Thomason who believed that without the valuable cooperation of the Indians the objects of the Calcutta School Book and the Calcutta School Societies

82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid*, p.119.
84. RCSS, MSS.

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could never have been accomplished.[86] Dr. Carey wrote on 4 July 1822 that the Indians "now unite with Europeans and Europeans with them in promoting benevolent undertakings, without serviling on their part or domination on ours. God is doing great things for Indians."[86] Nevertheless, by 1831 the missionaries in Calcutta had, more or less, ceased their cooperation with the Calcutta School Society "in disappointment at its continuing ban on religious teaching."[87] Radhakanta indeed was called upon to perform stupendous task of keeping these two Societies free from the Christian enthusiasts and associating the gurus with the programme of the Calcutta School Book and the Calcutta School Societies. By that time, right from the new year's day of 1828 there was lull in the activities of the indigenous (pathsala) department of the Calcutta School Society. When Radhakanta had been trying to convince the gurus of the bonafides of the Calcutta School Society, it faced financial crisis leading to the closure of the pathsala department.

Radhakanta, in his report to David Hare dated 1 January 1828, wrote: "I beg leave to state that upon enquiry I find that the 148 Indigenous schools and 6126 scholars are within the limits of the Town of Calcutta among which 83 schools with 4000 pupils are now under the control of the School Society, a great part of the remaining school Masters and some parents of the pupils are applying for Books and instructions under the management of the Society, but I think the present state of the fund will scarcely allow incurring additional expense."[88] The fifth report of the Calcutta School Society, dated February 20, 1829, admitted "the reduced state of the Society's finances"[89] and stated that there would be no further expansion of the pathsala department of the Calcutta School Society. Radhakanta was sad at the bleak prospect of any future development of the pathsalas in Calcutta. He requested David Hare to be mindful of a gradual and steady improvement of primary education as thought of at the time of the inauguration of the calcutta School Society.[90] It was to be noted as well that the School Society since its inception had indeed reformed and remodelled the primary education. The teachers and the students of the pathsalas had been getting proper guidance for improving their education based upon Bengali, their mother-tongue. The new education system helped them

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85. *The Second Report*, pp. 7-8.
86. Quoted in M.A. Laird, *op.cit.*, p.119.
87. *Ibid*, p.120.
88. RCSS, MSS.
89. *The Fifth Report of the Calcutta School Society*, Calcutta, 1829, p.4.
90. Radhakanta to David Hare, dated 26 January 1829, RCSS, MSS.

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overcome some of their morbid caste prejudices when students of different castes could read in the schools under the supervision of the Calcutta School Society.[91] There were, however, many schools left in 1829 to be brought under its purview, but the British authorities decided to wind up the Indigenous Department of the School Society.

David Hare, who headed[92] the pathsala department since the resignation of W.H. Pearce on 31 December 1822, submitted a report to the Committee of Managers of the Calcutta School Society on 10 January 1833 stating that the Society had been facing acute financial crisis owing to the closure of some of the Agency Houses and "the stoppage of Messers Mackintosh & Co., the Treasurers (of the Society) has left us entirely without immediate supplies excepting the Government allowances"[93] of rupees five hundred per month. David Hare, under such circumstances, recommended the closure of the pathsala department as the Society "have done nearly all that can be done"[94] for its development, but "the expense of the Society's English schools cannot be suddenly reduced".[95] Most of the European members of the Committee of Managers like Edward Ryan, W. Adam and W.H. Pearce agreed not to support the pathsala department, but Radhakanta could not accept the British verdict of closing down the pathsala department. He protested by resigning from the Committee of Managers and ceased to be the Native Secretary to the Society.[96] Henceforward his attachment to the School Society became formal and nominal.[97] The pathsala department - the department of Vernacular Primary Education - stopped functioning from February 1833.[98] It is, however, not clear from the income table of the Calcutta School Society that it had been facings real financial constraints in 1829-35, but the table showing individual subscriptions to the Society

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91. *The Firth Report of the Calcutta School Society*, p.6.
92. RCSS, MSS.
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Ibid.*
96. RCSS, MSS.
97. GCPI, 1823- 1842, Proceedings relating to Vernacular Education, 1840-1842
98. *Ibid.*

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indicates less and less accrual from 1833 till 1838-39 when subscriptions became nil.[99]

Radhakanta and David Hare differed in their views regarding the objectives of the Calcutta School Society. While David Hare considered the relinquishment of the pathsala department "would be productive of the least injury to the objects of the Society,"[100] Radhakanta believed "the grand design of the School Society was to improve the indigenous schools in Calcutta".[101] In the column entitled "Intended Remarks" of the Report of the Calcutta School Society it was emphasised that "the calls of the (indigenous) Department alone induced the society to apply to the Supreme Government, in 1828, for pecuniary aid, which was accordingly granted to the extent of Rs.500 per month; but a great part of the amount has already been absorbed by the Society's English schools...".[102] "This arrangement", critics of David Hare asserted, "appears to us to be very unreasonable, as there is not any institution in existence except the Indigenous Department...to assist the indigenous schools in Calcutta; whereas there are many public and private English schools in the Town, and their number is increasing rapidly".[103] They therefore, suggested that the English schools of the Calcutta School Society might be closed down and "out of the Government contribution, 200 Rupees be appropriated for the improvement of the indigenous schools, and 300 Rupees for the English education of the Society's 60 Bopys (instead of 30)

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99. *Income of the Calcutta School Society*: (All amount in Sicca Rupees)

1829	19,198	Individual subscriptions to the CAlcutta	
1832	10,972	School Society	
1833	11,943	1829	9,320
1834	10,895	1830	3,472
1835	10,137	1831	3,760
1836	8,299	1832	3,194
1837	6,733	1833	1,800
1838	6,609	1834	1,200
1839	6,779	1835	1,500
	1836	1,120	
	1837	400	
	1838	NIL	
	1839	NIL	

Source: Report of the Proceedings of the Calcutta School Society in General Committee of Public Instructions, 1823-1842),

100. David Hare to P.A. Wise, Secretary to the General Committee of Public Instruction, dated 10 April 1840, quoted in GCPI, 1823-1842.
101. RCSS, MSS.
102. *Ibid.*
103. *Ibid.*

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in the Hindoo College only..."[104]. This suggestion went unheeded. It was stated that after the closure of the pathsala department in 1833 the Calcutta School Society "became extinct, but the Government allowances of 500 Rupees has been continued...drawn by the Hare and applied to his school at Patuldanga which is solely under his personal superintendence and control."[105]

Obviously, it was not financial crisis alone that damped the Calcutta School Society's enthusiasm for the improvement of pathsalas, it was also the educational idea of the British like H. Mackenzie, W.H. Pearce, E. Ryan and David Hare, who were interested in "creating a predilection for the study of English"[106] among the Indians, that scarified the indigenous schools in favour of the Society's English institutions. David Hare, in 1833, by spending the subvention of rupees five hundred for the improvement of the English schools of the Calcutta School society acted contrary to its prime object which aimed at the improvement of the pathsalas.[107]

Though committed to the improvement of vernacular primary education Radhakanta was not averse to the progress of the Calcutta School Society's two other departments - the departments of Regular and English schools. In 1840 these two departments were merged into one institution - the Pataldanga English School at College Square, Calcutta.[108] The Regular School of the School Society located at Arpuly in Calcutta had, in 1829, a strength of about two hundred and twenty-five students "divided into eleven classes, occupied with different Bengalee studies from the alphabet upwards".[109] In fact, the students were "to acquire considerable knowledge of their native language before they begin to learn English".[110] The English school of the Calcutta School Society situated in Pataldanga admitted in 1829, ninety three students divided into suitable hierarchy of five classes.[111]

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104. *Ibid.*
105. *The Report of the Proceedings of the Calcutta School Society upto* 1833 in GCPI, 1823-1842, *Proceedings relating to Vernacular Education*, 1840-1842.
106. *The Eighth Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedings*, Calcutta, 1830, pp. V-VI: *The Ninth Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedings*, Calcutta 1832, p.3.
107. Anathnath Basu (Ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 363-64.
108. Radhakanta to Captain Francis Irvine, dated 15 November 1840, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, "Some unpublished letters of Raja Radhakanta Deb", *The Sunday Hindusthan Standard*, Calcutta, 26 August 1945; David Hare to P.A. Wise, Secretary to the GCPI, dated 10 April 1840, GCPI: 1823-1842; *Proceedings Relating to Vernacular Education*, 1840-1842.
109. *The Fifth Report of the Calcutta School Society*, Calcutta, 1829, p.3.
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Ibid*, p.13.

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Due to the merger of these two institutions into the Pataldanga English School the total strength of its students became not less than four hundred and fifty, who read in twelve different classes "studying nearly the same branches of education as the students in the Hindoo College".[112] Before the merger thirty students from the School Society's Regular and English schools were sent to the Hindu College for higher education. The expenses of their education were borne by the School Society.[113] Since the merger the thirty students were selected from the senior classes of the Pataldanga English School. The practice was abolished in 1851, but there was protest from the Indian patrons and enthusiasts of education.[114]

Radhakanta was happy at the attainment of those students who being patronised by the Calcutta School Society became the beneficiaries of Western education at the Hindu College. He was pleased to report to the School Society's Committee of Managers that among the English educated young men "one is engaged as translator in a respectable office and another as principal writer in the cutchery of the Collector at Natore".[115] Radhakanta proudly wrote the Committee, "Among all it is gratifying to remark a generous desire to impart the advantages they have received. Some who have left the school and who are in it, have established evening schools at which they gratuitously instruct other youths in the English language."[116] Radhakanta on the one hand continued to support English education, and on the other could not conform to the English based educational policy of the English. The government policy of promoting English language declared on 7 March 1835 did not, though, abolish Vernacular primary education, yet it was relegated to an insignificant requirement of the society. He feared that if the English language be only given importance by the Company government, a large number of youngmen in quest of English language and education might become half educated and shun their hereditary occupation like agriculture, trade and commerce.[117] It was contended that popular education if properly encouraged, promoted and made job oriented, could have offered the youth a meaningful and objective education. Idea as such might have led conservative Hindus like Radhakanta, Ram Kamal Sen, Rasamay Datta and Radhamadhab Bandopadhyaya and liberals like Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Sri Krishna Singh, David Hare and Edward Ryan

112. David Hare to P.A. Wise, dated 10 April 1840.
113. RCSS, MSS.
114. *Sambad Probhakar*, No.3912, 3 January 1851, p.2.
115. Report of Radhakantaa, dated 23 April 1823, in RCSS, MSS.
116. RCSS, MSS.
117. Amalendu De, "Radhakanta Deb (1784-1867)", *Itihas*, New Series, Vol.VIII, No.1, p.34.

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to establish on 14 June 1839 a Bengali pathsala to be attached to the Hindu College with a view to promoting popular education through the Bengali language.[118] It was however not destined to prosper as the craze created for studying the English language had already bewitched the Bengalis.

The Calcutta School Book Society with which Radhakanta was associated from 1817[119] to 1850 noted[120] after the declaration of English based educational policy of the government that a good knowledge of English could only contribute to the amelioration of India, and through it "the minds of the governors and the governed will be brought into closer communion."[121] The Calcutta School Book Society argued, "Under the happiest reigns of Hindu and Mohammedan princes, the knowledge which was employed for the happiness of the state was always drawn, not from the Vernacular, but from a foreign tongue; by the former from the Sanskrit; and by the latter from the Arabic and Persian; and if it must still be drawn from a foreign source, certain it is, that there is no one that can present claims equal to the English."[122] There was an obvious impact of this policy on the output of the Calcutta School Book Society. During the year 1821-1823, 26, 451 works in Bengali and 1,500 in English were published, while during the years 1834-1835 a total number of 9,750 titles in Bengali and 29,000 in English came out.[123] These figures are also explicit of one of the syndrom of the colonial educational policy. The vernacular primary education which W. Adam had called "the very foundation stone of national education"[124] was gradually put, if not brushed, aside.

2. Female Education:

Radhakanta was an acknowledged promoter of female education. J.E. Drinkwater Bethune (1801-1851), the founder of the Calcutta Female School, popularly known as the Bethune's School for Girls, wrote to Radhakanta, "I am anxious to give you the credit which justly belongs to you of having been the first native of India, who in modern times has pointed out

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118. *The Friend of India*, Vol.IV, No.234, 20 June 1839.
119. *The Fifteenth Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedings*, Calcutta 1852, p.6.
120. *The Eleventh Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedings*, Calcutta 1836, p.5.
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*
123. N.L. Basak, "Origine and Role of the Calcutta School Book Society in Promoting the cause of Education in India, Especially Vernacular Education in Bengal (1817-1835)". *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol.LXXVIII, No.146, July-December 1959, p.53.
124. Anathnath Basu (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p.361.

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the folly and weakness of allowing women to grow up in utter ignorance, and that this is neither enjoined nor countenanced by any thing in the Hindu Sastras."[125] Samuel Johnson, an American writer, called him a "native helper of the education of women."[126]

In 1819 when the Hindu College and the Calcutta School Society were two years old and the Calcutta School Society had completed one year of its short but active life in men's education, the Calcutta Baptists founded 'The Female Juvenile Society for the Establishment and Support of Bengali Female Schools' (hereinafter the Female Juvenile Society) to instruct women in free public female schools. W.H. Pearce was its President. Radhakanta had an occasion to write him, "We get our girls taught in Bengalee before they are married though all natives do not do so."[127] He doubted whether girls of 'opulent and respectable Natives'[128] would attend the schools of the Female Juvenile Society. Radhakanta wrote Bethune in 1851, "the antipathy of the respectable classes of natives against the establishment of public female schools is not a novel one nor does it originate from any malicious disposition towards the worthy founder",[129] the Christian missionaries. Radhakanta believed "that the sudden aggression from the close seclusion of hundreds of syears in which Hindu females of the higher classes have been kept...cannot but lead to great abuses."[130]

The Female Juvenile Society started its activities with eight students in one female school. The Society got itself incorporated with the Bengal Christian School Society and became the latter's female department in 1823. This and other Christian societies established twenty-four girls' schools in Calcutta. Meanwhile William Ward was trying to arouse the interest of the ladies of England by publishing gloomy accounts of Indian womanhood. He also attended an annual meeting of the British Foreign Society in London in May 1821, where Ward personally put forward the pathetic plight of the women of India. The British Foreign School Society decided to send Miss Mary Anne Cook to Bengal to educate Indian women at the auspices of the Calcutta School Society.[131]

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125. Quoted in *A Rapid Sketch*, p.19.
126. Quoted in Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb Bahadur (ed.), *Rajah Sir Radhakant Deb Bahadur, KCSI, A Brief Account of his life and character*, Calcutta, 1880, p.30.
127. Radhakanta to W.H. Pearce, dated 1 July 1819, quoted in RCSS, MSS.
128. *Ibid.*
129. Radhakanta to Bethune, dated 20 March 1851, quoted in Jogesh C. Bagal, "Raja Radhakanta Deb on Women's Education in India", *The Modern Review*, Vol.LXXI, No.6, June 1942, p.568.
130. *Ibid.*
131. M.A. Laird, *op.cit.*, p.134.

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Radhakanta was asked by W.H. Pearce how the services of Miss Cook could be best utilised in promoting female education in Calcutta. In his reply dated 10 December 1821, Radhakanta put it clearly that the Hindu community was well convinced "of the utility of getting their female children taught at home in Bengalee by their domestic school masters...before such female children are married or arrived at the age of 9 or 10 years at furthest."[132] Radhakanta also told Pearce that the Hindu girls would not be allowed by their guardians to read in public schools. Pearce was advised to utilise the services of Miss cook in the school established by the Christian missionaries for the education of the poor girls in Calcutta.[133] Radhakanta felt that Miss Cook might be requested to teach poor Hindu women of respectable castes European techniques of both manual and mechanical arts and "when these women have acquired a degree of skillfulness, they may be retained in the families of respectable Hindoos and their knowledge will thereby the diffused among native female generally without interfering with their immemorial customs and usages."[134] The main manual work of art taught in the girls' schools of the early 19th century-England was needle-work.[135] It was duly introduced in Calcutta and became popular. Many girls in Calcutta were reported to have taken to sewing of socks, handkerchiefs, bags and towels, and some of their beautiful hand made pieces of art, mainly of needlework, were exported to England and earned money.[136] Radhakanta, however, observed with keen interest the academic activities of the girls' schools established by the Female Juvenile Society. He was present on 18 May 1826, when the foundation stone of the Female Central School was laid at Hedua (in north Calcutta) by Lady Amherst. He conveyed her his gratefulness for taking keen interest in the education of the Hindus.[137] As an official of the Calcutta School Society he, on 24 March 1821, reported that the "girls belonging to the school instituted by the Juvenile Society were examined" along with the students of the pathsalas under the control by the Calcutta School Society.[138] David Hare was informed, on 25 April 1823, by Radhakanta that "several native girls educated by the Juvenile Society were examined (and their) proficiency in reading and spelling gave all great pleasure."[139] In addition to the female students of the Female Juvenile Society "Many diligent girls...who received their instruction at the domicile

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132. RCSS, MSS.
133. *Ibid.*
134. *Ibid.*
135. M.A. Laird, *op.cit.*, p.135.
136. *Samachar Darpan*, Dated 8 March 1823, 10 April 1824 and 28 June 1828, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, Vol.I, pp. 15-19.
137. RCSS, MSS.
138. *Ibid.*
139. *Ibid.*

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of their father or neighbours, were examined by the Pandits and other officers deputed by the (Calcutta School) Society,"[140] and they also were given rewards.

Radhakanta, in support of woman's education and for the use of the Female Juvenile Society got the Strisiksa Vidhyaka written by Gourmohun Vidyalankar. Its first edition was published in 1822. This booklet helped the Christian missionaries to popularise the idea and utility of female education. It was so popular that its third edition came out in 1824. Some of its excerpts were also included in the books meant for the girls' schools.[141] Bethune while engaged in promoting female education in Bengal realised the importance of Strisiksa Vidyayaka and asked for Radhakanta's permission to reprint it once again.[142] It was found, on the other hand, that the schools run by the Female Juvenile Society, had been attracting less and less students as Christian religious teaching was being more and more emphasized in these schools. Consequently, all the local schools in Calcutta were consolidated, in 1828, into one Central School.[143] It may be guessed that Bethune could well realise the unpopularity of the Bible centric education programme of the Female Juvenile Society. The liberal Hindus, while commenting on the activities of the Female Juvenile Society, wrote, "the supposedly non-missionary Ladies `Society would make a much more significant contribution to girls' education if it could bring itself to stress general knowledge rather than Christian teaching, for girls educated in its schools were not welcome as teachers in upper caste Bengali homes,"[144] A contemporary anonymous Brahmin expressed his views on the female education programme of "a few benevolent European gentlemen and ladies (who) made some attempt to introduce female schools, but they have failed excepting in one or two places where a small number of the very lowest classes attend the schools for the sake of clothing and other rewards."[145] As a supporter of women's education the Brahmin appealed to the respectable Hindus of Calcutta, Panihati, Baranagar, Chinsura and Santipur to establish girls' schools and patronize female education.[146]

The Gyannuweshun, a periodical of the Young Bengal, was de-

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140. Radhakanta to Bethune, dated 20 March 1851.
141. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Women's Education in Eastern India, The First Phase*, Calcutta, 1956, p.26.
142. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Unabimsa Satabdir Bangla*, Calcutta, 1963, pp. 254-55.
143. M.A. Laird, *op.cit.*, p.138.
144. *The Reformer*, December 19, 1831, quoted in M.A. Laird, *op.cit.*, p.136.
145. *Samachar Darpan*, 3 March 1838, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* 1830-1840, Vol. II, pp. 99-100.
146. *Ibid.*

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lighted to report on 29 April 1837 that Motilal Seal (1792-1854) and Haladhar Mallik had decided to form an organization to promote women's education.[147] The Young Bengal felt delighted that the two men went ahead with the idea of female education, though they did not belong either to the Young Bengal or the Brahmo Sabha. They were advised not to be afraid of the Dharma Sabha, the citadel of Hindu superstition and inimical towards women's education. In fact, among the members of the Dharma Sabha there were a few, like Radhakanta, who supported education among women. Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay, the Secretary to the Sabha, could not support female education.[148] Radhakanta, in 1849, was criticized by one of the Dharma Sabhaites* when Bethune was citing Strisiksa Vidhayaka to popularize women's education among the Hindus. Radhakanta was cautioned that unless he gave up his stance in favour of female education, many of his supporters would leave his 'Dhul' (party) and join that of Pramathanath Deb, "a staunch advocate to preserve Hinduism and Hindu Females."[149] Tp Bethune Radhakanta wrote, "To prevent any misconception of my individual opinion respecting the great cause you have been struggling for, I declare that I have been shewn myself both by precept and example a staunch advocate of female education...the importance of which in improving the morals and promoting the social happiness of a nation is obvious."[150] Bethune was told that high caste Hindus would not allow their girls to attend the female school founded by him on 7 May 1849, but girls of navasak[151] caste might well attend his school. Radhakanta hoped that more and more girls' schools would be established in Calcutta which would be staffed by the women educated at the Bethune's school.[152] The participating consciousness of Radhakanta vis-a-vis women's education might have inspired him to establish a girls' school, on 22 May 1849, in his own house at Shovabazar, where both English and Bengali languages were taught.[153]

The girls' school founded by Bethune played pioneering role in popularizing by degrees women's education in eastern India. The most

147. Quoted in *Ibid.*
148. *The Hindu Intelligencer,* Vol.IV, No.27, July 2, 1849, p.210.
*. Please see Appendix-F.
149. *Ibid.*
150. Radhakanta to Bethune, dated 20 March 1851.
151. *Ibid.* Radhakanta listed the *navasak* classes, viz., "Gopa (the cowherd), Mali (the gardener), Taili (the oilman), Tanti (the weaver), Modaka (confectioner), Varaj (the cultivator of bettle plant), Kulala (the potter), Karmakara (the blacksmith), and Napita (the barber)", vide: Jogesh C. Bagal, "Raja Radhakanta Deb on Women's Education in India", *The Modern Review*, Vol.LXXI, No.6, June 1942, p.568.
152. Radhakanta to Bethune, dated 20 March 1851.
153. *Sambad Vaskar*, dated 29 May 1849, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Radhakanta Deb*, Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala, No.20, p. 32.

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plausable reason for its success was the exclusion of Christian religious teachings from its curriculum. The zealous endeavor of the Female Juvenile Society could not catch the imagination of the people because, as Dr. Thomas Smyth wrote in 1855, its programme of propagating Christianity through education was rejected by the recipients of education.[154]

3. Higher Education:

Higher education in India came to be construed, particularly from the date of the recording of Macaulay's minute of the 2nd February 1835, as an education to be acquired through the English language. Macaulay wanted the Indians "thoroughly good English scholars", as they had expressed their desire "to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic...".[155] Lord Bentinck's resolution of 7 March 1835 stipulated that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone."[156] The resolution further stated that the students studying Sanskrit or Arabic would not receive any monetary assistance from the government which would also not patronise printing of Oriental works.[157] A few years preceding the resolution it was observed that the British were becoming less and less zealous in promoting primary education.[158] H. Sharp, sometimes Educational Commissioner to the Government of India, had succinctly interpreted the educational policy of the Company government stipulated in the 19th century. He wrote, "the authorities began by patronizing the ancient form of learning. They they awoke to the illiteracy of the masses, set forth enthusiastically to establish common schools and then recoiled at the magnitude of the task."[159] Consequently came the policy of promoting English language, literature and sciences; and mass education through the vernacular languages was left in the hands of the Indians.

The impact of this policy was obvious. Indians colonized by the British gave priority in learning English language, and through it, sciences and other useful knowledge. There was yearning for learning and under-

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154. Dr. Thomas Smyth, "Native Female Education", *The Calcutta Review*, July-September 1855, p.102.
155. H. Sharp (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.116.
156. *Ibid.*
157. *Ibid.*
158. *Vide*: Section B of this Chapter.
159. H. Sharp (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 77.

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standing physical and chemical sciences. Radhakanta believed his countrymen would be prosperous by learning English language, literature and sciences.[160] He once lamented that "India has had but a limited share of science for many centuries",[161] but hoped that European experience would once again enrich India in scientific knowledge.[162] Radhakanta himself used to attend various scientific experiments at the Calcutta Medical College, evening lectures on Natural Philosophy at the Hindu College and scientific exhibitions at the houses of his English friends. He even used to visit the Botanic Garden to hear the "lucid explanations of the wonders of Botany, from his most intimate and erudite friend, the late lamented Dr. N. Wallich".[163]

Radhakanta was associated with the Hindu College in Calcutta as one of the members of its managing committee. The pioneering role of the institution in standardising higher education in the Presidency of Fort William is too well known to call for any detailed discussion here. However, Radhakanta during his times and office saw to it that the Hindu College could come over the financial, administrative and academic impediments. A couple of years after the establishment of the Hindu College it faced a financial crisis. Though a sum of rupees 1,13,179 was subscribed in 1816-1817 for starting the college, the funds proved to be inadequate for providing necessary inputs for educational purposes. The Managers of the Hindu College therefore asked for aid from the Government.[164] It was in January 1818 that the authorities of the College approached the Government for aid.[165] They sent a reminder to the Government on 19 June 1823.[166] The remainder further added that independent of the aid they "are greatly in want of a suitable building for the Institution".[167] The Government agreed to sanction a subvention of Rs.300 per mensem if the College was placed under the control of the General Committee of Public Instruction. The authorities of the College accepted the condition and received the aid.[168]

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160. Radhakanta to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, dated 20 May 1827, quoted in *A Rapid Sketch*, pp. 4-6.
161. *Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India*, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1838, pp. 67-8.
162. *Ibid.*
163. *A Rapid Sketch*, p.30.
164. Public General Letter from the Court of Directors to General Department dated 5th September 1827, quoted in GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings Copy Book of letters received and issued by the Committee*: 1 March-30 December 1828, pp. 201-22.
165. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, "The Hindu College, the First Phase", *The Modern Review*, Vol.LXXXXVIII, No.3, September 1955, p. 229.
166. *Ibid.*
167. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, "The Hindu College, the First Phase", p. 229.
168. Fisher's Memoir, dated February 7, 1827, quoted in H. Sharp (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 183.

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The court of Directors wrote, "... the assistance being granted, the General Committee of Public Instruction should exercise a regular inspection and supervising control, as Visitors over the Vidyalaya."[169] In 1824 the question of such control was discussed between the General Committee of Public Instruction and the Committee of Managers of the Hindu College. It was subsequently resolved that "probably the best mode of apportioning the management would be by the appointment of a Joint Committee to consist of equal number of the present native Governors and Directors and of the Managers of the General Committee."[170] The Managers of the Hindu College hoped the General Committee of Public Instruction would not adopt any measure "to which the natives express an unanimous objection...".[171] While believing that the joint efforts of the British and the Indians would make the Hindu College a worthy seat of learning, they reminded the Company Government that in issuing any rules for the institution it would never be forgotten that "it is a Hindu Institution for the purpose of cultivating especially English literature and science alone, that the admission of persons likely to injure that respectibility and consequently to contract the utility of the College will always be strictly prohibited and that works directed against the character or principles of our countrymen will also be excluded."[172] The Government decided that H.H. Wilson was to act as the Visitor of the College. In a meeting of the Committee of the Hindu College attended also by H.H. Wilson held on 6 June 1825, it was decided that the teachers of the College would get "some additional remuneration as solicited by their Letters of the 5 May (1825)."[173]

Besides financial and administrative problems there were also initial academic problems. The students were most irregular in attending College. A circular letter was therefore sent to the guardians requesting them to see that their wards did attend the college regularly. It was also a problem that some students were often withdrawn as soon as they acquired a smattering

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169. Public General Letter from the Court of Directors to the General Department, dated 5th September 1827.

170 Gopimohun Deb, Radhakanta Deb, Chandra Kumar Tagore, Guruprashad Bose, Radhamadhab Bandopadhyaya, Kamala Kanta Dass, Ram Kamal Sen, Rajkrishna Singh, Rasamay Datta and Ladlymohun Tagore to the President and members of the General Committee of Public Instruction, dated 1 July 1824, quoted in GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings, Copy Book of letters received and issued by the Committee*: 31 July 1823-3 December 1824, pp. 219-21.

171. GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings, Copy book of letters received and issued by the Committee*: 31 July 1823-3 December 1824, pp. 219-21.

172. *Ibid.*

173. Proceedings of a Meeting of the Committee of the Anglo-Indian (Hindu) College, Monday 6th June 1825. The meeting also "resolved that the following be the proposed scale of the Establishment agreeably to the following Resolution:-

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knowledge of the English language and obtained employment "with a salary of 30 or 40 Rupees per mensem."[174] With a view to solving the question of dropouts J.H. Harington, the President of the General committee of Public Instruction, was eager to accept the suggestion of Thomason who thought that scholarships to the students might induce them to continue their studies.[175] Serious allegations of mass copying in the examination hall was also made. The Reverend W.H. Mill, Principal of the Bishop's College, who examined, in 1832, the students of the four upper classes of the Hindu College, reported that on the day of their examination in Mathematics they started "copying which in the colleges of Europe is wholly confined to those who are considered as 'non reading men'".[176] He observed that even the most careful and ambitious students "manifesting no reluctance whatever to lend themselves by the loan of their Paper to the defeat of the purposes of fair examination."[177] The Enquirer,[178] a mouthpiece of the radicals in Calcutta, accused the Reverend Mill of putting stiff questions in Mathematics.

The managers of the Hindu College in their meeting of 6 June 1825 discussed some other academic problems of the College. They noted, "the Teachers four in number have direct charge of the four superior classes only, and as the school comprises ten classes, the lower six are left to the charge of Monitors, selected in turn, monthly from the upper classes, an arrangement which interrupts the studies of a number of the most promising scholars, and provides inadequately for the instruction of the younger

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	Present salary	Proposed Increase	Proposed salary
Head Master-	250	100	350
1st Assistant-	100	50	150
2nd Ditto -	40	30	70
3rd Ditto -	32	18	50
4th Ditto -	-	32	32
2 Monitors Rs.16 each	-	32	32
2 Pundits -	32	8	40
1 Munshi -	16	4	20
1 Teacher Arithmetic	-	150	-

Source: GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings, Copy book of letters received and issued by the Committee*: 1 January - 19 July 1825, pp. 335-41.

174. Comment of J.H. Harington, dated April 15, 1824: GCPI, *Minutes, Proceedings of the Committee of Public Instruction*: 1823, Vol.3, Part I, pp. 169-71.
175. *Ibid.*
176. GCPI, 11 January - 28 December 1833, Vol.12, part I, pp. 163-79.
177. *Ibid.*
178. *The Enquirer*, quoted in *The Bengal Hurkaru and Chronicle*, Vol.IX, No.39, New Seeries, 15 February 1832, Microfilm Reel No.4, National Library, Calcutta.

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boys."[179] The Managers decided to introduce better and efficient system of teaching. It was resolved that a teacher be appointed, who would only teach arithmetic as the existing teachers "find little leisure to bring the classes forward in arithmetic."[180] Radhakanta, his father Gopimohum Deb, Ram Kamal Sen and others of the managing committee of the Hindu College approached the General Committee of Public Instruction to "grant a further monthly allowance as would enable a competent person who would devote his whole time in giving instructions at the College as well as teach the boys the rudiments of European science till a permanent lecturer is provided."[181] J.H. Harington had been also contemplating after a suggestion from H.H. Wilson to appoint a Head Master, "who can introduce the upper classes to the Vidyalaya to a classical knowledge of the English language."[182] There were other requirements to make the College a worthy seat of learning. H.H. Wilson suggested "a small library be attached to the school for the use of students under the responsibility and regulations of the managing committee." He observed, "A taste for reading might be formed which would be invaluable preparative for course of advanced study."[183] Wilson was happy that the Managers of the College had decided to charge rupees five per student per month toward tuition fees, and the fees collected were expected to ease its financial situation.[184] He further observed that the Hindus were initially reluctant to pay for the education of their children, but the Managers of the College could make the guardians feel the necessity of paying tuition fees.[185] Wilson hoped in 1825 that the Managers of the Hindu College with the help of the Government and the General Committee of Public Instruction would surely make the College "the main channel by which real knowledge may be transferred from its European source into the intellect of Hindustan."[186] As a matter of fact, the initial difficulties faced by the college during its formative years were mostly overcome by 1825. H.H. Wilson wrote on 13 January 1827 that he was happy "of the progressive improvement of the

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179. Proceedings of a meeting of the Managing Committee of the Hindu College, dated 6 June 1825, quoted in GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings, Copy book of letters received and issued by the Committee*, 1 January - 18 July 1825, pp. 335-37.
180. *Ibid.*
181. GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings, Copy Book of letters received and issued by the Committee*: 31 July 1823-3 December 1824, pp. 96-98.
182. H.H. Wilson quoted by J.H. Harington in GCPI, *Minutes, Proceedisngs of the Committee*: 31 July 1823-1838, VI.3 part I, pp.169-71.
183. Report of H.H. Wilson, Visitor of the Hindu College on the annual examination of the students of the College, held on 22 January 1825: GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings*: 1 January - 18 July 1825.
184. *Ibid.*
185. *Ibid.*
186. *Ibid.*

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Institution" and "if popularity may be considered as a test of the merit of any institution, it may be confidently appealed to on the present occasion."[187] He also noted that Azimuddin and Zehur Ali, two students of the Calcutta Madrassa used to attend the Hindu College to study English.[188] In his report to the General Committee of Public Instruction dated 8 January 1828 Wilson recorded further progress of the Hindu College which had meanwhile raised the number of classes to seventeen; and its students were steadily attainting academic proficiency.[189]

The slump in the business world in 1830-31 had not only deprived the Calcutta School Society of patronage of the British mercantile community but also made the Indian patrons of the Hindu College economically weak to pay for the education of their children.[190] Radhakanta, David Hare, Dwarkanath Tagore and others wrote that "the commercial distress has contributed to diminish the income of the College by rendering the recovery of Bills difficult (and) by the failure of the House of Messers Barretto & Sons compelling the withdrawal of Pay scholars."[191] To add to the financial crisis was a social consternation arising from the teaching of liberal and free ideas among the students of the Hindu College by Derozio. His ideas appeared to be strange, and were unacceptable to the traditional Hindus, some of whom even withdrew their boys from the College.[192] In spite of these economic and academic problems the Managers of the Hindu College did not waver from the original plan of promoting higher education based upon English language and literature, Western education and science. When the General Committee of Public Instruction proposed abolition of Ornamental and architectural drawing from the curriculum of the Hindu College, its management opposed the move successfully and did also appoint

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187. H.H. Wilson to the President and the members of the General Committee of Public Instruction, dated 13 January 1827: GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings, Copy book of letters received and issued by the Committee*: 1 December 1825 - 27 February 1827, pp. 245-58.
188. *Ibid.*
189. GCPI, *Correspondence and proceedings*: 1 March 1827-28 February 1828, part II, pp. 493-510.
190. Report of James Prinsep, Officiating Visitor of the Hindu College to the General Committee of Public Instruction, dated 28 February 1833: GCPI, 11 January - 28 December 1833, Vol.12, part I, pp. 171-72.
191. Radhakanta Deb, Gopimohun Deb, David Hare, Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Rasamoy Datta, and Ram Kamal Sen to the General Committee of Public Instruction, dated 11 May 1833, quoted in *Ibid.*
192. H.H. Wilson to the General Committee of Public Instruction, dated 31 January 1832: GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings, Copy book of letters received and issued by the Committee*: 1 January - 1 November 1832, pp. 39-47.

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"Mr. Rowe to teach surveying to the senior students of the College."[193]

Radhakanta was associated with the Hindu College for 34 years till 1850 witnessing its progressive transformation into a premier institution of advanced learning. The reason that led to his resignation from the management of the College was essentially a question of his conservatism in religious belief,[194] it had nothing to do with any academic question or problems of the College. He was also associated with the Sanskrit College of Calcutta (founded in 1824), a centre of Indian system of higher learning. Radhakanta was a constant visitor to the College,[195] and often conducted its annual examinations.[196] He officiated as its Secretary from 13 December 1836 to March 1837.[197] Though the promotion of Oriental languages like Arabic, Sanskrit and Persian had been initially the educational policy of the British Government, yet there happened, in 1835, the volte face in the stand of the Government vis-a-vis education to be encouraged among the Indians. This was primarily due to Macaulay that the Government initiated a plan of encouraging only English language and, through it alone, Western science. Oriental languages were not of course banned, but an absolute official inactive attitude towards them belittled their importance in the eyes of the students who if preferred studying in the Sanskrit College would no longer receive stipends as per the orders of the General Committee of Public Instruction.[198] Radhakanta wrote, "To abolish the study of the oriental language...is the sole scheme of Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Trevelyan."[199] He observed rather sadly that the British Government "could not say with propriety why should/they not encourage Sanskrit."[200] Radhakanta understood that "it is the duties of the rulers of countries to preserve the customs and religions of their subjects."[201] He, on the other hand, praised the Muslim administration of India that "bestowed many villages on the pundits and others for the promotion of education" and Sanskrit.[202]

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193. Lakshminarayan Mukherjee, Secretary of the Hindu College to the General Committee of Public Instruction, dated 27 September 1833, GCPI: 11 January - 28 December 1833, Vol.12, part I, pp. 242-43.
194. This aspect is discussed in the next Chapter.
195. *A Rapid Sketch*, pp. 17-19.
196. *Ibid.*
197. Brajendranath Bandopadhyay, *Kalikata Sanskrit College Itihas*, Vol.I: 1824-1858, Calcutta, 1949, p. 44.
198. Radhakanta to H.H. Wilson, dated 5 March 1836, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, "Some Unpublished letters of Raja Radhakanta Deb", *The Sunday Hindusthan Standard*, August 26, 1945.
199. *Ibid.*
200. *Ibid.*
201. *Ibid.*
202. *Ibid.*

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Neithe H.H. Wilson could appreciate the policy of note patronizing the Sanskrit College. He wrote Ram Kamal Sen that both Bentinck and Trevelyan failed to realize the importance of the Sanskrit language.[203] Wilson like Radhakanta believed that both the Sanskrit and English languages were to be given equal importance for enriching Indian vernacular languages. Had the British Government adopted such a policy, the Indians could have acquired liberal learning and learnt Western sciences without much tears. The policy inspired by Macaulay, on the other hand, made education elitist instead of universal. Wilson rather despondently remarked that Bentinck took often wrong decisions as he hardly read anything.[204] Apprising Wilson, in 1851, of the state of Sanskrit learning Radhakanta wrote, "Sanskrit learning generally speaking is rapidly on the decline in India. Our pandits void of encouragement attend only to the ritual department of their Sastras while the European educationalists think it useless."[205] Quoting the editor of the Friend of India (13 February 1851) who called the Rigveda `nonsense' and Sanskrit `a dead language', Radhakanta seemed to draw the attention of Wilson to the irresponsible comments of an Englishman who by virtue of his position as the editor of Friend of India was supposed to be a knowledgeable person. Radhakanta observed, "Thus you will observe how narrow, how wretched, and how absurd are the sentiments of one of the first Editors of India who is deemed the organ of our Government."[206] The attitude of the Government towards the Sanskrit language was also decried by the Indians. A letter to the editor of the Hindu Intelligencer expressed the opinion that the negligent and indifferent attitude of the Government towards the Sanskrit language had also effected the people - they were becoming, by degrees, ignorant of the richness of their Sanskrit heritage and tradition.[207] An anonymous `reader' of the Hindu Intelligencer expressed sorrow and anguish at the gradual decline in the number of good Sanskrit scholars and hoped the "Government will think on the subject, and will not allow such a noble language to be lost in oblivion."[208] The British were even criticized by the Asiatic Society of Paris for not promoting Sanskrit studies in India. The Society noted in 1846 that, "the study of the Sanskrit has never been so little

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203. H.H. Wilson to Ram Kamal Sen, dated 20 August 1834, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal (ed.), *Ram Kamal Sen* (by Peary Chand Mitra), Calcutta, 1964, p.18.
204. *Ibid.*
205. Radhakanta to H.H. Wilson, dated 7 October 1851, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, "Raja Radhakanta Deb on the reactionary attitude of the Europeans in India and the revival of Sanskrit learning", *The Modern Review*, August 1942, Vol.LXXII, No.2, pp. 157-60.
206. *Ibid.*
207. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.IV, No.5 Monday, 29 January 1849, p. 34.
208. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.IV, No.4, Monday, 22 January 1849, pp. 25-6.

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encouraged in India as at the present time."[209]

Arthur A. Macdonell, an English Sanskrit scholar, did not perhaps euphemistically consider the cultivation of Sanskrit literature the most significant event in the history of European culture since the Renaissance,[210] but in India the colonial education hand in glove with exploitation had not only put Sanskrit studies aside but also indulged in export of valuable Sanskrit books and manuscripts to Britain. Radhakanta once told the Asiatic Society of Bengal that the Society as well as the Government of British India would see that the manuscripts of the Vedas were returned to India from the British Museum.[211] However, the participating role of Radhakanta in the educational programme of the British Government, which was essentially geared to the colonial needs, was critical. He cooperated when he felt that the Government had been planning for the educational improvement of the Indians, and dissented when the education policy of the British proved to be unproductive for the people in general.

209. *A Rapid Sketch*, pp. XXXIV-XXXV.
210. Arthur A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi, 1971, p.1.
211. Debendranath Tagore, *Atmajivani* (Satish Chandra Chakraborti, ed.), Calcutta, 1962, p.508.

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3

CONSERVATIVE HINDU BRAKES ON ANGLICISED CHANGES:
RADHAKANTA DEB'S SOCIAL DILEMMAS

A. In defence of Sanatan Dharma:

If Radhakanta had displayed a dissenting as well as participating role in the sphere of education planned by the Company Government, he in most of the questions of social changes - whether sponsored by the British or the liberal Indians - opted for opposition. This was due to his innate belief in Hindu traditional customs and rituals bequeathed to the Hindus by the *shastras* and the *puranas*. But if any question of social change arose from a scientific innovation guaranting better living without interfering with the traditional religious social customs and practice, Radhakanta did not hesitate to support it. His conservatism in respect of Hindu social customs and usages has been well exemplified by Friedrick Max Muller who had an epistolary relationship with Radhakanta. Max Muller had an intellectual exchange of ideas with him on the question of *sati-daha* or the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands. He was really surprised to find Radhakanta still believing, in the fifties of the 19th century, in a divine sanction authenticating the *sati-daha*. H.H. Wilson had also his share of animated controversy between him and Radhakanta over this same question.

Max Muller wrote, "Even Radhakanta Deva seemed inclined at least to agree with me that in the Veda, as we possess it, there is no direct command for this terrible custom; but he took his stand on the old tradition and maintained that we did not possess the whole of the ancient Vedic literature, and that the authority for the old custom may have existed in one of the lost sakhas or branches of the Veda."[1] The following is another excerpt from Max Muller on Radhakanta analysing his support for the custom of Sati. Max Muller commented, " That an educated Hindu should defend the burning of widows seems strange; still if Popes and Cardinals could defend auto-da-fe's or the burning of heretics, nay, even of witches, because the fire would purify and save their souls which could not be saved

1. F. Max Muller, *Auld Lang Syne: Second Series(My Indian Friends)*, 1899, quoted in Sushil Gupta(ed), *Rammohun to Ramakrishna by Max Muller*, Calcutta 1952,pp.36-7,47-8.

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otherwise, why should not an Indian Raja have been convinced that the burning of widows could not be wrong, believing, as he did, that it was enjoined by a lost sakha of the Veda, and that the poor women could not be saved unless they followed their husbands on their heels into another world?"[2]

During the Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck Regulation No.XVII of 4 December 1829 made the custom of dying of widows in the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands illegal. The conservative Hindus led by Radhakanta and his father, Gopimohun Deb called upon the Governor-General and expressed their resentment against the Regulation. In a written petition they requested the Government to withdraw the Regulation as it had violated their religious practice sanctioned, they believed, by the *shastras* and performed by the ancestors of all Hindus. They further contended that the predecessors of Bentinck, like Cornwallis, Lord Moira and Amherst, desisted all plans for the abolition of the *sati* custom, for they had decided not to interfere with matters of Hindu 'conscience'[3]. Bentinck heard the arguments of the conservative Hindus with some discomfort; he even apprehended some disturbances in British India,[4] but did not withdraw the Regulation.

Radhakanta, Gopimohun Deb, Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyaya and Ram Kamal Sen subsequently decided to form the *Dharma Sabha* to protect the *sati* rite and got the case taken to the Privy Council in England where the Regulation was, however, upheld. The *Dharma Sabha* was constituted on 17 January 1830. The *Samachar Chandrika* edited by Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay was its mouthpiece, and it gave a call to the pro-sati Hindus to boycott the supporters of the Regulation XVII of 4 December 1829. The Dharma Sabhaites declared that they would not consider the anti-sati section of their society as real Hindus, for they cared little for "the memory of their ancestors or their religion" and, moreover, had already "defiled themselves by eating and drinking forbidden things in the society of Europeans."[5] The *Sambad Purnachandrodaya* was another pro-Dharma Sabha newspaper. It was critical of the liberal Hindus who

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2. *Ibid*, p.49. For a description of *Sati-daha* by a Muslim eye-witness in 1816 see Appendix B.
3. *Calcutta Gazettte*, 18 January 1830, quoted in Anil Chandra Das Gupta(ed), *The Days of John Company*, Calcutta,1969,pp.460-70.
4. C.H. Phillips(ed), *The Correspondence of Lord Wiliam Cavendish Bentinck*, Vol.I, Oxford University Press, 1977, pp.90-100; Dilip Kumar Biswas, *Rammohun Samiksa* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1983, p.345.
5. Quoted in Anil Chandra Das Gupta(ed),*op.cit.*, pp.466-70.

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welcomed the anti-sati Regulation. It subsequently ridiculed their elder supporters for advocating the abolition of the *sati* rite. they were asked whether by rejecting Hindu customs and rituals they would be getting rewards from the British.[6] The liberal press, on the other hand, welcomed the action taken by the Governor General in making *sati daha* illegal. *The Friend of India* after making some laudatory comments on the reforming zeal of the liberals fired the *Dharma Sabha* and accused it for perpetrating `Spiritual Despotism'[7] in the Hindu society. The institutionalization of Hindu conservatism in the *Dharma Sabha* was, however, purported to play an organizing role in unifying all the Hindu of the country desirous of perpetuating the Hindu socio-religious customs and rituals. It was really pitted against both the *Brahmo Sabha* and the Young Bengal who had initiated discussion on and, practised social and religious reform like worship of one God, abjuration of caste restrictions, eating along with the Europeans and the Muslims, widow-remarriage, patronizing public schools for girls, giving equal proprietary rights to the Indian Christians etc. The *Dharma Sabha* became popular among the conservative Hindus in Calcutta and its suburbs, and "as far as Allahabad"[8]. It also started a social service programme by providing monetary assistance to the poor needy Hindu families. The *Dharma Sabha* with a view to rendering charitable service in Calcutta divided the city into several *pallis* and appointed *Palli Tattwabadhayaks* to supervise the service.[9]

Radhakanta's support for the custom of *sati* had has been interpreted as the expression of his religious fanaticism or fundamentalism by both his contemporary and later liberals. But a probe into his philosophical interpretation of religion may perhaps reveal his reasonable, subtle and finer religious traits. Radhakanta, in fact, believed in one God and was, at the same time, an ardent supporter of image worship. To him the Brahma and the Hindu pantheon were equally important. He told the Reverand C.H.A. Dall that the Hindu were given 'dolls' in their childhood to worship, but they "grow up to worship without such help".[10] Radhakanta also explained his religious idea to the Reverand in the following words: "My religious is Shalokyo, to be always in the same place with God; Shajugio to be in conscious communion with God; Neerban, to be lost in God, as a star in the

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6. *Sambad Purnachandrodaya*, 7 September 1835, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyaya (ed), *Sambadpatre Sakaler Katha*, Vol.II, pp.694-95.
7. *The Friend of India*, Vol.IV, No.173, 19 April 1838, p.177.
8. *The Englishman*, quoted in *The Friend of India*, vol.IV, No.231, 30 May 1839.
9. *Samachar Chandrika*, No.1964, 15 July 1844; and also No. 1997, 7 November 1844, Microfilm Reel No.13, National Library, Calcutta.
10. Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb Bahadur(ed), *op.cit*, pp.58-60

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morning light".[11] The contemporary biographer [12] of Radhakanta put it " though he is a strict adherent of the esoteric doctrines of Hinduism, he is tolerant to the faith of others; he believed and has often declared it openly that whatever may be the different outward form of religion amongst the different nations of the earth they all worship in effect the one and the same God; that a sincere and strict observance of the doctrines of morality, combined with a firm belief in an All- Wise, All - Powerful and All - Merciful Deity, cannot but lead to ultimate happiness." Unlike Raja Rammohun Roy Radhakanta believed in *pauttalik* or image worshipping Hindu religion. He once explained the rationale of the existence of various religious system in the world. "Something like a division of labor had clearly been ordained by God", Radhakanta once told, "among all nations for the world."[13] In his personal life he was a follower of Vaishnavism founded in Bengal by Sri Chaitanya in the 15th century A.D.

In spite of such a rational religious philosophy his persistent emphasis on the infallibility of traditional Hindu socio-religious customs and rituals led him to controversies with the Young Bengal, Brahmos, and the English officials. He was impatient to any criticism of the Hindu religion, more so when it was directed against caste restrictions, Brahminism, image-worship and traditional Hindu belief of pollution of communal eating along with heterogeneous castes and races. The inquiries into the Hindu social and religious system that involved Radhakanta and alienated him from Raja Rammohun Roy and Young Bengal started from the beginning of the 19th century. Radhakanta could not accept what Rammohun wrote and propagated against image-worship. The contention of Rammohun that the idol worship had had remained among the Hindu " the source of prejudice and superstition and of the total destruction of moral principle, as countenancing criminal intercourse, suicide, female murder and human sacrifice"[14] - was not popular among the conservative Hindu. The Hindu critics of Raja Rammohun Roy could neither grant it that idol-worship" is only applicable to those who are incapable of elevating their minds, (and) not possessed of sufficient understanding."[15] As Gibbon has held paganism partly responsible for the decline of ancient and pre- Christian Greek and Roman civilizations, so Rammohun also thought Hindu idolatry" more than any other pagan

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11. *Ibid*
12. *A Rapid Sketch*, p.31
13. Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb Bahadur(ed), *op.cit.*, pp.58
14. Rammohun Roy, *Translation of the Moonduk Opunishud*, Calcutta, 1819
15. Rammohun Roy, *Translation of an Abridgement of the Vedant and the Ishopanishad*, Calcutta,1816.

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worship, destroys the texture of society."[16] Rammohun further observed that the pliancy of the Hindu, which was the result of the multitude of their religious rites and ceremonies, contributed to the Muslim conquest of Hindusthan.[17] He, in 1819, at the house of Biharilal Chaubay at Barabazar in Calcutta, denounced Hindu idolatry; Radhakanta, then a young man of 35 years old, was present there to hear the middle aged Hindu rebel who had taken Calcutta by storm since his arrival there in c. 1814. A Brahmo mouthpiece in the middle of 19th century commented that Rammohun's disapproval of idolatry, primarily, increased his adversaries among his countrymen.[18]

While Rammohun Roy and his associates formed the *Brahmo Sabha* in 1828 to cleanse the Hindu religion of image-worship, casteism and other inhuman or useless customs and rituals, and ultimately institutionalize the worship of one God, the Young Bengal or the disciples of Henry L.V. Derozio (1809-1831), "summoned Hinduism to the bar of reason"[19] and pronounced it `nonsense'. The students of Derozio started discourses on "Free-will, fate, faith, the sacredness of truth, the attributes of God..., the hollowness of idolatry, and the shame of priesthood."[20] Derozio asked them " to sacrifice home and every kindred tie at the Truth."[21] An angry father of a Hindu collegian wrote a letter to a contemporary newspaper[22] narrating the disturbing effects of Derozio's instructions on the students who started "looking down upon the Brahmin pandits as thieves and dacoits, parents fools."[23] They "can memorize the geography of Russia", but were ignorant of their own country. The management of the Hindu College was alerted to take steps against the Derozian system of teaching. The Managers of the College ordered that the students were not to attend any societies where political and religious issues were being raised and discussed freely. It was added that " any student being present at such a society, after the promulgation of the order will incur serious displeasure"[24] of the Managers.

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16. *Ibid*
17. Rammohun Roy, *Brahminical Magazine, No.I.*
18. *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, Aswin 1769 Sak, quoted in Benoy Ghosh(ed), *Samayikpatre Banglar Samajchitra*, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1963, p.106.
19. Kishori Chand Mitra, "Radhakant Deb", *Calcutta Review*, No. XC, pp.324-5.
20. Thomas Edwards, *Henry Derozio, the Eurasian Poet, Teacher and Journalist*, Calcutta, 1884,p.32.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Samachar Chandrika*, 6 November 1830, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, Vol.II, pp.231-32.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *The Mirror of the Press or the Political and Literary Register*, Vol.I, No.21, 18 September 1830,p.327, Microfilm Reel No,8, National Library, Calcutta.

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The *India Gazette* called the notification" presumptuous, tyrannical and absurd" as it interfered "with the private judgement on political and religious questions".[25] The Christian missionaries expressed concern at the Hindu conservative reaction to free discussion on religion. James Hill of the Union Chapel remarked that the orthodox Hindus " schooled in the most abject servility of thought to their spiritual guides, and enslaved by the grossest prejudices ... have no ideas corresponding with what we mean by toleration and free discussion. Moreover, they (are enslaved) by idolatry".[26] The radicals in Calcutta were surprised that the Indians, `savages' as they were, "are rarely thankful for having civilization imposed on them."[27] Derozio, however, could not carry on his job before the Hindu opposition.

Seven days preceding Derozio's dismissal Radhakanta, on 18 April 1831, wrote to David Hare: "Being informed that Krishnomohana Banerjya and Rusik Krishna Mullick, the teachers of the Patuldanga School purchased tickets for dining at the Town Hall, I (Radhakanta) beg to request to remove them as soon as possible, if you wish to promote welfare of the Institution."[28] David Hare did not heed to the request of Radhakanta who once again, on 2 September 1831, repeated his request for the ouster of"those outcaste (Krishnamohun and Rasik Krishna) from the school."[29] Meanwhile, on 23 August 1831 the Hindu society of Calcutta woke to a sensational incident which had has been described for the last one hundred and fiftynine years. Here is that incident after Radhakanta's words: "Krishnomohana Banerjya and Rusik Krishna Mullick, the teachers of the Patuldanga school under the control of the Calcutta School Society and six others having dined together at the same time at the House of the former at Simlea threw out bread and beef bones in the compound of an unoffending Brahmin... shouting, `O Chucraburty's sons eat them up' "[30]. While describing the incident to the President, Vice-President and the Members of the Calcutta School Society Radhankanta informed them that Krishnamohun had already been `excommunicated' by his mother and relatives, and he had "deserted his house."[31] Radhakanta asked them to terminate without any delay the services of these offenders from the Patuldanga School. He requested them not to view the incident from the "spirit of

25. Quoted in Benoy Ghosh, *Bidrohi Derozio*, Calcutta 1961, pp.64-5.
26. *The Mirror of the Press*, etc. *Loc.Cit.*
27. *The Bengal Hurkaru and Chronicle*, Vol.II, No.69, New Series, 18 September 1828, Microfilm Reel No.3, National Library, Calcutta.
28. RCSS, MSS.
29. Radhakanta to David Hare, dated 2 September 1831, quoted in RCSS,MSS.
30. quoted in *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*

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Christian religion."[32] Radhankanta further observed that it might be admitted and "known that no Christian, Mahammadan, or Hindu who has forsaken his religion or wantonly broken his caste and rank in society ought to be associated, or conversed with, trusted,or employed in any employment."[33] Referring to Derozio's dismissal Radhakanta pointed out that Krishnamohun and Rasik Krishna might be removed from the Pataldanga School "in the same manner as lately done in the Hindu College."[34] But their dismissal did not prove to be as smooth as that of their preceptor from the Hindu College. Prasanna Kumar Tagore, who had readily acquiesced in Derozio's dismissal, remarked, "in justice to the accused party (it may be said) that they are entitled to an opportunity to explain the charges before they are condemned."[35] W. Adam thought Radhakanta's decision to oust Krishnamohun and Rasik Krishna from the teaching staff of the Pataldanga School `exparte'.[36] Radhakanta answered that he would be sorry" to part with these teachers, yet their indiscreet and improper behavior oblige me to this measure (of dismissal)."[37] David Hare and W.Adam, however, were not convinced of the arguments put forth by Radhakanta. They told him that the two teachers had done nothing improper within the school premises, and therefore, the question of their removal from the school would be improper. Radhakanta further argued that " the gross offence committed by them after the school should not be overlooked",[38] and "if these teachers be countenanced, they will rather do harm to the Hindus than good, as those who profess no religion may not be expected to the true Christian, or instrumental in converting their pupils into Christianity, but on the contrary corrupt them with bad examples and make them free thinkers and outcaste."[39] He also explained to the English authorities of the Pataldanga School the traditional and popular concept of the Hindu society which hold that the Hindus, to use the words of Radhakanta, "who believe in the `Shastras', or Hindu Law cannot be associated or sit with degraded Hindu offenders, who drink forbidden Liquors, eat prohibited things, and show contempt of the Vedas."[40] Radhakanta reminded them that " the Europeans themselves would not place their own sons under the tuition of such a Christian as has forsaken

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32. Radhakanta to the President, Vice-President and Member of the Calcutta School Society, dated September 1831, quoted in RCSS, MSS.
33. *Ibid*
34. *Ibid*
35. RCSS,MSS.
36. *Ibid*
37. *Ibid*
38. Radhakanta to Sir Charles Edward Grey and Sir Edward Ryan, dated 10 November 1831, quoted in RCSS,MSS.
39. RCSS,MSS.
40. *Ibid*

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his religion", so also the Hindus "could not entrust the morals and education of theirs to him who was once a Hindu, then an apostate."[41] To the suggestion made by Edward Ryan that Krishnamohun and Rasik Krishna might be allowed to defend their own case before the Managing Committee of the Calcutta School Society, Radhakanta replied that how could the Hindus sit with those two persons who had defied the basic Hindu social customs and usages. Both Krishnamohun and Rasik Krishna suffered for their youthful exuberance of iconoclasm in an essentially conservative country.

Radhakanta personally might not have felt any rub when he turned down the request by a section of the conservative Hindus of Calcutta to rend away his friendship and social relations with Dwarkanath Tagore who had travelled overseas to Europe. They also had invoked *shastras*, Hindu customs and usages to tell them that Dwarkanath as Hindu had lost his sanctity and caste due to his travel overseas. Radhakanta replied that Dwarkanath merited honour instead of disgrace for travelling to Europe.[42] The deputationists were not happy. They returned muttering, "The kuliyoga is come, even a saint like the Rajah(Radhakanta) has been turned into a devil."[43] Rajendralal Mitra(1822-1891) would consider Radhakanta "no enemy to real reformers. He found no fault with those who dissected the human body in the (Calcutta) Medical College. He subscribed as freely to the fund for sending native youths to England to prosecute their studies in medicine as for any orthodox undertaking."[44] Radhakanta expressed his ideas of reform in connection with popularising vaccination in the traditional Hindu society. He wrote, "... the Tikadars(inoculators) cannot exercise any influence over the natives, the medical gentlemen of Calcutta may communicate first with those young Baboos that are styled by Europeans liberals and enlightened, since they do not care much for their religion, or ancestors, and may easily come forward to get their children vaccinated, and then go on with their collegiates, who are annaxious to innovate or reform them, and would perhaps readily adopt the improved practice, either now or after the demise of their old parents. Vaccination will be adopted step by step without annoying the orthodox Hindus."[45] Radhakanta perhaps left the Hindu

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41. *Ibid*
42. Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb Bahadur(ed), *op.cit.*, pp.43-4; also *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.XIV, No.20, 20 May 1867.
43. *Ibid*
44. *Ibid*,pp.46-7.
45. Radhakanta to W. Camaroon, dated 13 August 1832, quoted in J.Grant and J.T. Pearson(ed), *The Indian Journal of Medical Science*, Vol.I, No.2, February 1834, pp.34-6.

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indetermination of cutting the Gordian knot of orthodoxy to time. Commenting on the Hindu reforming psyche H.H. Wilson told that "if not interfered with by their rulers, the Hindus prove to be their own reformers".[46] A contemporary liberal newspaper sarcastically commented that, "Rajah Radhakanta Deb has found in some old Sanskrit work passages sanctioning vaccination, he has a knack of finding texts in old books sanctioning every improvement, scientific or moral, whose adoption by our countrymen is inevitable."[47] The same newspaper, however, after the death of Radhakanta in 1867, wrote, "it was certainly uncharitable to find fault with the religious convictions of such a man, to say that he was opposed to progress because he did not go the full length with go-ahead Young Bengal, to censure him for resenting aggression on the part of the Government on the Hindu religion or the cherished customs of the people. Occupying the position of Defenders of the Faith, he would not have been true to himself and to his country if he had done otherwise."[48]

Radhakanta was consistent as the *Defender of Faith*. As he had objected to the Regulation making the customs of sati illegal, he did also intimate the Government of his disapproval of the legal steps that were being taken to legalise the marriage of Hindu widows. As soon as the Widow Remarriage Bill was introduced, on 17 November 1855, in the Legislative Council of India, a meeting chaired by Radhakanta was held at his house. He spoke against the Bill and added, "the British Government had pledged themselves not to interfere with the religion or the customs and usages of the natives of this country, but when they were about to legalise the marriage of Hindu widows, it was evident that they were going out of the limits of legislation which they had prescribed for themselves."[49] Radhakanta reminded his audience as well as the Government that the Law Commissioners as early as 1837 raised the question of widow remarriage and asked several *Sudder* (sadar) courts to give their opinion on the subject. The courts objected to the introduction of widow-remarriage "on the ground that it would be a direct encroachment upon Hindu law and religion and disorganize the whole system of Hindu law of inheritance."[50] He the added that the Hindu society was the same in 1855 as it had been in the year 1837;

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46. *The Bengal Spectator*, Vol.II, No.21, July 1843,p.191, Microfilm Reel No.8, National Library, Calcutta.
47. *The Hindoo patropt*, Vol.IV, No.20, 15 May 1856,p.155.
48. *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.XIV, No.20, 20 May 1867,p.154.
49. The Hindu Intelligencer, Vol.X, No.49, 3 December 1855, p.387.
50. *Ibid*, also R.Macan, Officiating Register, Sudder Court, Calcutta, to J.P. Grant, Officiating Secretary to the Indian Law Commission, dated 24 July 1837, *Legislative Department, Paper of Act XV*, 1856, Vol.I, PartII,pp.75-87.

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it had undergone no change, "yet the Legislative Council were about to promulgate a law removing the legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows. It is, therefore, highly necessary that a petition should be presented to the Legislative Council and every other lawful means be used with a view to prevent any such uncalled for and injurious interference with our religious and social customs."[51] With a view to petitioning to the Legislative Council not to pass the Bill of Widow-Remarriage into law, the meeting on the proposal of Radhakanta formed the *Hindu Dharma Rakshaka Sabha*. It may be recalled that Radhakanta had been observing with keen interest the legislative functions of the British Indian Government since 1836. He wrote to H.H. Wilson that " the Legislative Council are making new regulations and law, publishing them in the Calcutta Gazette for public opinion before passing the same, ... the laws I believe will not be able to supercede those of Raghunandan and Jimutabahana, "[52] the two important sources of Hindu law.

Kasi Prasad Ghosh use the columns of the *Hindu Intelligencer* to express the views of the *Hindu Dharma Rakshaka Sabha* against the legal move towards widow-remarriage. It was asked, "If the bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister could be thrown out in Britain, because it offended the prejudice of Scotchmen, what harm would there be in not passing the widow marriage bill into law, on the ground that it was opposed to the custom of the Hindus and wishes of by far the greatest bulk of the people of this country?"[53] Kasiprasad pointed out that any legalisation of widow-remarriage might lead to unforeseen mischief in the Hindu society. He contended that the Bill did not provide for any safeguard for unlawful and unequal matrimony. In India " we have no such officer as a marriage register" appointed by the Government, who would look into any irregular marriage. Neither " we have churches or similar public places for the administration of the sacred rite (of marriage), where the officers in charge of them are answerable for promoting any unlawful or unequal connection".[54] It was observed that in the absence of institutions for proper administration of marriage in India, which had been, however, "established in Europe for the purpose of preventing illegal or irregular marriage, it would be down right injustice to allow Hindu widows to marry as they please."[55] The liberal press, on the contrary, welcomed the widow-remarriage Bill and criticized

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51. *Ibid*
52. Radhakanta to H.H. Wilson, dated 5 March 1836, quoted in Jogesh C. Bagal, *op.cit.*
53. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.X, No.49, 3 December 1855,p.388
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*

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Radhakanta's attempt to foil its passage in the Legislative Council. Addressing him it was asked, "To the Raja (Radhakanta) himself, we would submit the serious injury he does to his own earned reputation by putting himself at the head of men with more zeal than discretion in every movement that the latter may set on foot to obstruct social progress."[56] Referring to the widow- remarriage movement in Bengal it was pointed out that its initiator, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, was a brahmin, and the Bill "was the result of a Brahmin movement, and the country will scarcely view it as other than presumptuousness on the part of one of the Raja's status setting himself in opposition to those (brahmins) whose birthright it is to give the law to Hindu society."[57] Another contemporary liberal news magazine expected Radhakanta to be humane; and it was really shocked "to find a man of Rajah Radhakant Deb's standing in Hindu society...expressing so earnest a desire for the enforced celibacy for life of infant widows."[58] It criticised Kasiprasad Ghosh for not supporting the widow-remarriage movement as well as the Bill. Ghosh, who was educated at the Hindu College and became 'the first Hindu'[59] to publish a volume of poems in English, surprised the liberals by siding with an institution of "Hindu bigotry and barbarism".[60] *The Englishman* feared that Radhakanta by withdrawing his support from a noble cause would loss his position in the society.[61]

There were, however, twenty eight petitions bearing fifty five thousand and seven hundred and forty six signatures sent to the Legislative council against the Widow-Remarriage Bill.[62] The number of petitions supporting the Bill was only twenty-three. The petition from the *Hindu Dharma Rakshaka Sabha* contained three objections to the Bill. They were that "the proposed alteration in the law militates against the statutes of Parliament, and that it is not merely permissive in its character." The supporters of widow-remarriage asserted that the objections were not tenable as "it is impossible to suppose that there never was a period in Hindoo history when widows were permitted to remarry. Menu is no authority with the Hindoos of the present day on the subject of marriage."[63] It was perhaps fairly told that there might be a moratorium on the legislative functions in India unless some Hindu or Muslim laws were not broken

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56. *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.III, No.48, 29 November 1855, p. 381.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *The Bengal Hurkaru*, quoted in *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.IV, No.I, 3 January 1856, p.7.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. Quoted in *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.III, No.49, 6 December 1855, p. 385.
62. *Legislative Department Paper of Act IV, 1856.*
63. Quoted in *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.IV, No.18, 1 May 1856, p.142.

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through.[64] The marriage of widows was made legal by the Act XV of 26 July 1856.

The conservative Hindus had been consistent in opposing widow-remarriage now on legal front and a decade earlier - in 1845- in an intellectual forum. The Bengal British India Society, in February 1845, solicited the views of the *pandit* members of the *Dharma Sabha* on the propriety of widow- remarriage.[65] The *Dharma Sabha* in view of the demand of the times and the importance of the issue, published, on the advice of Radhakanta, a treatise on widow-remarriage. The 28- page tract, brought out in 1845, argued that the re-marriage of once wed women could not be justified on moral, social and religious grounds. The treatise entitled *Bidhababibaha Nisedbisayak Byabastha*[66] quoted from Manu, *Mitaskhara, Brihannaradiya Puran, Smarta Bhattacharya, Utbahatattwa, Brihaddharma Puran* and commentaries on Manu by Kallakbhatta to emphasize that *brahmcharya* (celibacy) was the best way of life for the widows. Moreover, widow-remarriage had never been practised in the Hindu society lest it would disturb the harmony of the Hindu family life.[67] It so happened that within a year from the enactment of the widow-remarriage Act the Rebellion of 1857 broke out, and the legislative action in legalizing widow-remarriage disaffected the Indians in no insignificant way. A contemporary Bengali periodical remarked, "the legalization of Hindu-marriage has displeased the Hindu sepoys. That enactment is directly at variance with the precepts of the Hindu religion and has caused much disaffection in all parts of India."[68] An appeal was made to repeal the Act "from which (the Hindus) have received no advantage while it has been the cause of... much mischief to Government."[69]

B. Defender of the Hindu Society

Conservative Hindus led by Radhakanta and the liberals like

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64. *Ibid.*
65. *Samachar Chandrika*, No.2029, February 1845, p.885, Microfilm Reel No.13, National Library, Calcutta; Ashim Mukhopadhyay, "Dharma Sabhar Bidhababibaha Ni-sedhbisayak Byabastha", *Itihas*, New Series, Vol.IX, No.2, Bhadra - Agrahayana 1376 B.S., p.239.
66. The 28-page treatise in Ashim Mukhopadhyay, *op.cit.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Sambad Purnachandrodaya*, 26 May 1857, quoted in *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.XII, No.2, 1 June 1857, p. 173.
69. *Ibid.*

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Debendranath Tagore, and even secular minded David Hare[70] took upon themselves the social duty of protecting the Hindu society from proselytization by the Christian missionaries. It was noticed that the Hindu students of the Hindu College grew a fancy of attending the lectures by Alexander Duff who started preaching Christianity from August 1830. The Hindu Managers of the College warned the students not to attend such lectures. The Hindu warning evoked sharp reaction from the supporters of the missionaries. One of them wrote, "a Christian Government and Christian community will not tolerate that the managers of an institution, supported in part by public money, should single out Christianity as the only religion against which they direct their official influence and authority."[71] The Christians believed that "unless Christianity is introduced into the Colleges and Schools, the moral tone of the natives of this country will never be improved."[72] The Hindu society, on the other hand, had an inbuilt resistance system to proselytization. For instance, when in September 1831 the General Committee of Public Instruction decided to appoint the Reverend Procter to the post of Professor of Political Economy and Law of the Hindu College, few well-wishers of the College like Radhakanta, Prasanna Kumar Tagore and David Hare objected to the selection of a Christian missionary to the said post. They observed, "we consider his (Reverend Procter) being by profession a Teacher of Christian missionary Doctrines an insurmountable objection to his holding an office in an Establishment confined to Hindoo Youths and the success of which entirely depends in our belief upon carefully avoiding all interference with the Religious principles of the Hindoos."[73] Referring to the disturbing effects of Derozio's teachings both on the students and the administration of the Hindu College they further told that "the College has already suffered much in the estimation of the natives by the conduct of some youngmen educated in it."[74] While turning down the proposal of the General Committee of Public Instruction to appoint the Reverend Procter they wrote that the management of the College "could neither ask nor expect a Christian minister to pledge himself to such avoidance of all interference with the Religious principles of the Hindoos, and whatever might be his discretion, it would not be possible to persuade the parents of the children,

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70. David Hare declined to admit Lalbehari Dey into his school. He told him, "All Mr. Duff's pupils are half-Christian; I won't take you; you are half-Christian; you will spoil my boys "(Ref: Lal Behari Day, *Bengal Peasant Life; Folk Tales of Bengal; Recollections of my School-Days*, in Dr. Mahadevprasad Saha (ed.), Calcutta, 1969, p.498
71. *The India Gazettee*, quoted in Thomas Edwards, *op.cit.*, p. 72.
72. *The Hindu Intelligenecer*, Vol.VII, No.37, 12 September 1853, p. 291.
73. GCPI, *Correspondence and Proceedings. Copy book of letters received and issued by the Committee*; 1 January - 27 December 1831, Vol.9, pp. 320-22.
74. GCPI, Vol.9.

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or the Hindoos generally that the pupils of the College would not be biased in their opinions by a Professor who was also a clergyman."[76]

Radhakanta told the Reverend J. Makai that the Christian missionaries were incapable of imparting secular education. Their educational activities, though worthy of appreciation for their pioneering efforts to popularize education, seemed to be programmed for conversion of the Hindus into Christianity.[78] The conservative Hindus and their mouthpiece the *Samachar Chandrika* objected to the introduction of the Bible in the curriculum of the school of Alexander Duff. Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay, the editor of the newspaper, even suggested expulsion of the Christian missionaries from India.[77] The Hindu society felt itself committed to save it from proselytization. There was a concerted protest by 'orthodox' Hindu Radhakanta and liberal Unitarian Hindu Debendranath Tagore when Alexander Duff, in April 1845, converted Umesh Chandra Sarkar (then 14 years old) and his 11 years old wife into Christianity. The most well known Brahmo mouthpiece wrote an editorial pointing out the exigency of unity among the Hindus to save their society from the Christian missionaries. It asked the Hindus not to get their children educated in the missionary schools. It also solicited their help for establishing a school of their own.[78] Debendranath personally approached Radhakanta as well as radical Ramgopal Ghosh for their active help and cooperation. Soon a charitable school, the Hindu Hitarthi Vidyalaya was founded on 1 March 1846 to give education to the Hindu boys. Radhakanta was the President of its managing committee. It was to impart English education to the boys, and would contribute towards "the resistance of the designs of the Christians."[79] With the same object in view the Seal's Free College was established. Motilal Seal was its founder. Radhakanta, Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyaya, Debendranath Tagore and Ramaprasad Roy (1817-1862) were happy to be present on its inaugural day when it was announced that many Hindu students belonging to the Duff's school had left it to join the Seal's Free College.[80] Radhakanta desired that the College would appoint neither Christian missionaries nor "Hindu-

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75. *Ibid.*
76. Radhakanta to the Reverend J. Makai, dated 1 November 1850, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Radhakanta Deb, Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala-20*, pp. 19-20.
77. *Samachar Chandrika*, 2 November 1833, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, Vol.II, p.531.
78. *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, quoted in Debendranath Tagore, *Op.cit.*, pp. 62-4.
79. Presidential speech of Radhakanta at the meetings of the Hindus held on 18 and 25 May 1845, quoted in the *Samachar Chandrika*, No.2054, 26 May 1845, p.123. Microfilm Reel No.13, National Library, Calcutta.
80. *Samachar Chandrika*, No.2057, 5 June 1848, p.148.

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Christians"[81] as its teachers. Several Hindu *pandits* would however be appointed to teach the Hindu students the basic principles of Hindu religion, customs and manners. Motilal Seal declared that the *Dharma Saba* was to supervise its management.[82] Those were the days of proselytization backed and supported by the British colonial administration. The British continued to preach Christianity emphasizing its superiority over other systems of religion. One of their mouthpieces wrote that "Newton, Bacon, and other renowned philosophers had not thought Christianity beneath their attention, and died happy in the belief of it; and Paine, Voltaire, and other infidels, although in their life time they fought against the Bible, yet in their last moments were obliged to acknowledge Jesus."[83] Narrating the conversion of Ganga Narayan Seal to Christianity the *Asiatic Journal* observed that he not only found the *Hindu Shastras* "unworthy of a rational mind,"[84] but also discovered the Koran worthless. Colonial as well as irrational religious propoganda by the British in India gave rise to a conservative Hindu reaction supported by the Brahmos led by Debendranath Tagore.

The year 1845 appeared to be a year of vexation for the leader-guardian of the Hindu society. The publication of the draft, in January 1845, of what became the Lex Loci Act (Act XXI) in 1850, abolishing the Hindu or Muslim practice of forfeiture "of rights or property in regard to persons renouncing the Hindoo or Mahomedan religion"[85] annoyed the Indians. Radhakanta, on behalf of the *Dharma Sabha*, petitioned[86] on 21 April 1845 to the Government not to alter such provision of the Hindu law as "inflicts forfeiture of rights upon any party renouncing, or who has been excluded from the communion of the Hindu religion."[87] Asutosh Deb (1803-1856) of Calcutta and the inhabitants of Madras had requested the Government to withdraw the draft of the Lex Loci Act.[88] The *Samachar Chandrika* thought it a legal measure to "convert the innocent and submissive Hindus into Christianity."[89] When the Government, in 1849, published once again the draft of the Lex Loci Act, the *Dharma Sabha*, the people of Madras and Asutosh Deb reiterated their demand for its withdrawal. But G.A. Bushby, Secretary to the Government of India, wrote to the petitioners that the British

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81. *Ibid.*
82. *Ibid.*
83. *The Asiatic Journal*, Vol.29, May-August 1839, June 1839.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.IV, No.51, 17 December 1849, p.404.
86. *Samachar Chandrika*, 21 April 1845, p.26.
87. The Hindu Intelligencer, Vol.IV, No.51, 17 December 1849, p.404.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Samchar Chandrika*, No.2031, 3 March 1845.

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Indian administration had to think also about those who had been dissociating themselves from the Hindu society. In clarifying the principle of the Government he stated that "the principle which guides the Government of India is that all the religions professed by any of its subjects shall be equally tolerated and protected; but the Government of India will not enforce the Hindoo Law of inheritance upon persons who have chosen to quit the Hindoo community."[90] However logical was the statement of the Government the British Christian missionaries seemed to be overzealous for the welfare of the Indian Christians for whom a zamindary controlled by a "Christian Landholders' Society" was contemplated. It would protect the Indian Christians, and make provisions for their livelihood.[91] Contemporary Indian newspapers and periodicals - whether liberal or conservative - wrote that the Lex Loci Act would encourage many Hindus to be converted into Christians.[92] It would destroy the Hindu religion and foster Christianity in India.[93] They warned the Indians that by being Christians they would not gain any social status either among the Indians or the English.[94] Protests and petitions did not deter the Government from passing the Lex Loci Act. Radhakanta complained to H.H. Wilson against the increasing Christian influence in the administration of the British Indian Government. He wrote that the Lex Loci Act did strike "at the foundation of the whole fabric of the Hindu religion and jurisprudence."[95] Radhakanta was sorry to tell Wilson that "missionary influence is now on the ascendant; every department from the fountain head Government to the lowest course of office is infested with it. The Christian bigots have marked me out as the butt of their rancour and hostility for my rigid adherence to my principle."[96]

The Hindus feared that the Lex Loci Act would encourage the English educated liberal Hindus to embrace Christianity. With a view to restraining conversion among the Hindus the *Patitoddhar Sabha* was formed at a meeting held in Calcutta on 25 May 1851. This meeting was presided over by Radhakanta. It was also to find out means to re-admit the 'Hindu-Christians' into the Hindu society in conformity with the Hindu

90. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.IV, No.51, 17 December 1849, p.404.
91. George W. Johnson, *The Stranger in India or three years in Calcutta*, Vol.II, London, 1843, pp. 77-9.
92. *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, No.97, Bhadra (sak), quoted in Benoy Ghosh (ed.), *Samayikpatre Banglar Samajchitra*, Vol.II, pp. 132-39.
93. *Sambad Probhakar*, 12 Baisakh 1261 (B.S.), quoted in Benoy Ghosh (ed.), *Samayikpatre Banglar Samajchitra*, Vol.I, Calcutta, 1962, pp. 201-2.
94. *Samachar Chandrika*, No.2026, 17 February 1845, p. 861, Microfilm Reel No. 13, National Library, Calcutta.
95. Radhakanta to H.H. Wilson, dated 7 October 1851.
96. *Ibid.*

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principles and precepts.[97] The *pandits* of Nabadwip recommended that the converted Hindus could well be readmitted into the Hindu fold if they would repent as well as propitiate their conversion. The *Patitoddhar Sabha* was described as a "Hindoo protest against one of the most prominent evils of the system of caste, which has been for centuries considered the bulwork of Hindoosm."[98] But it would never "attract the mind that has once emancipated itself from idol worship, from Hindoo degradation."[99] Radhakanta seemed to have lost faith in the word of honour the British rulers were used to give the Indians assuring the... of their policy of non-interference into the religious affairs of the Hindus. He doubted whether the much pronounced policy of non-interference was really 'honest',[100] and started believing that it, in fact, was a cover for their pro-Christian religious policy.[101]

Between the proselytization by Alexander Duff, the enactment of the Lex Loci Act and the 'Mutiny' of 1857 there were some particular conversions of Hindus in Calcutta, which created considerable apprehensions in the Hindu society. In 1848 Kailash Chandra Basu, a teacher of the Hindu College became Christian; he was soon followed by Gurucharan Singha, a student of the same College in 1849. Consequently, the Managing Committee of the Hindu College requested the Council of Education to suspend the converted teacher from its teaching staff. The Council of Education, after some dilatory tactics, took action to the satisfaction of the Managing Committee. Prasanna Kumar Tagore, however, resigned from the management of the Hindu College. When the demand for the expulsion of Gurucharan from the Hindu College was also made, Radhakanta was involved in a protracted as well as controversial correspondence with J.E. Drinkwater Bethune, then the President of the Council of Education. Radhakanta pointed out to him that the original plan of enrolment of students to the Hindu College was to admit Hindu boys only, and as Gurucharan ceased to be a Hindu, he had forfeited his right to continue his studies there. The Council of Education was, however, planning to open the College to students of all castes and creeds and rechristen it. Obviously, Radhakanta could hardly accept the policy of the Council of Education *vis-a-vis* the Hindu College. He also, like Prasanna Kumar Tagore, resigned from its management. Radhakanta was offered by the Government to take back the money

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97. *The Friend of India*, Vol. XVII, No.857, 5 June 1851, p.356; also *The Bengal Hurkaru and the India Gazette*, Vol.L, No.71, New Series, 9 September 1852, p.283, Microfilm Reel No.30, National Library, Calcutta.
98. *The Friend of India, Loc.cit.*
99. *Loc. Cit.*
100. Radhakanta to H.H. Wilson, dated 7 October 1851.
101. *Loc. Cit.*

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he donated to the Hindu College in 1816, but he declined to take it.[102] As soon as the decision of the Government regarding the opening of the Hindu College to all students irrespective of castes and creeds was made public in 1852, the Indian press supporting the Hindu cause interpreted it a sinister move towards Christianizing the whole of the Hindu society. It was recalled that the College was "looked upon as an institution exclusively devoted to the interests of the Hindus, and any innovation in that respect is calculated to alarm the prejudices of the parents and guardians, as well as to shake their confidence in the good faith of their rulers to preserve religious opinions inviolate."[103] The Hindus were advised to plan for the education of their boys as their most prestigious and premier educational institution was taken over by the Government. The situation appeared to be more serious in 1852 than it was in 1845 when Umesh Chandra Sarkar was converted into Christianity by Alexander Duff. The Hindus in 1845 had to protect themselves against proselytization; in 1852 they were perhaps planning to establish a parallel education system. The *Bengal Hurkaru*,[104] however, welcomed the decision of the Government. It wrote that the opening of the Hindu College to all castes and creeds marked the foundation of "true...national education (and) the neutral system which knows no distinction of sects."[105] It was also contended that the system of Indian universities, which was being worked out after the desire of Lord Dalhousie would be as well based upon a 'neutral' religious policy in respect of education.[106]

The Hindu College, from February 1853, ceased to be a college exclusively meant for the Hindu boys. The Hindus decided to start an institution "to be styled the Hindu Metropolitan College, with which is incorporated the Seal's Free College."[107] It was inaugurated on 2 May 1853. The founders of the Hindu Metropolitan College made it clear that it was not a challenge to "the cosmopolitan educational policy of the Government, but a vindication of the original object of the Hindu College which had been a place of instruction established by Hindoos and for Hindoos exclusively as its very name imports."[108] They by establishing the Hindu Metropolitan College attempted to assert their right of pursuing an exclusive education

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102. *Sambad Probhakar*, No. 4511, 21 December 1852, p.1, Microfilm Reel No.10, National Library, Calcutta; also *The Hindu Intelligencer*, 5 June 1854.
103. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.VIII, No.19, 9 May 1853, p. 84.
104. Quoted in *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol. VIII, No.46, 14 November 1853, p. 362.
105. *Loc.Cit.*
106. *Loc.Cit.*
107. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.X, No.18, 30 April 1855, p.136.
108. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol. VIII, No.2, 16 May 1853, p. 156.

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policy for the Hindus independent of the Government.[109] Captain D.L. Richardson was chosen its first Principal. Radhakanta was the President of the Managing Committee of the College, while Motilal Seal was its Patron. Raja Kali Krishna Deb Bahadur, Ramaprasad Roy and Ramanath Tagore were chosen its General Managers. Debendranath Tagore was a member of its Executive Committee.[110] The more the Government and the Christian missionaries were encroaching upon the Hindu society the more the Hindus were trying to protect it. They believed that they "are at perfect liberty to do that."[111]

By the mid-19th century Radhakanta was no happy man. He found that the Government had been paying little respect to the Hindu heritage and way of life. More and more young Hindus were being de-Hinduised. Most of the friends of Radhakanta like Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyaya, Ram Kamal Sen and Radhamadhab Bandopadhyaya were dead. Among his British friends to whom he could express his own fears and ideas, namely H.H. Wilson, Captain F. Irvine and Edward Hyde East, were no longer in India. Radhakanta in his letter to H.H. Wilson expressed his sorrows and anguish. He wrote, "I have now scarcely any old friends or acquaintances among the Europeans here and therefore rarely move about among their circles. The men in power are fond of those young parvenues who have gained a name by giving a loose to the enjoyment of English cuisines and of liquid fire and distilled damnation."[112] As a guardian of the Hindu society Radhakanta had welcomed the attempts of the Reverend C.H.A. Dall, an American Unitarian, to save the youth from the bad effects of alcohol "the self-destroying liquid fire."[113] It is, however, noteworthy that Radhakanta, the supporter of *Sati-daha* and widowhood had not raised a wall of separation between the conservative Hindus and the liberals. In the context of British rule in India he talked about unity among the Indians. Radhakanta was described by one of his contemporaries as "a link between the conservative and the progressive classes"[114] - a link which proved to be a necessity for the political interests of the colonialised Indians.

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109. *Loc.Cit.*
110. *Loc.Cit.*
111. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol. VIII, No.19, 9 May 1853, p. 147.
112. Radhakanta to H.H. Wilson, dated 7 October 1851.
113. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Radhakanta Deb*, *Op.cit*, pp. 47-9.
114. Montriou, quoted in Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb Bahadur (ed.), *op.cit*, pp. 52-4.

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4

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF A COLONIZED PEOPLE :

RADHAKANTA DEB'S MESSAGE OF UNITY

A. From Institutionalization of Dissent to Political Associations:

1. Dharma Sabha:

A calcutta based correspondent wrote a letter in 1852 to the editor of a Bengali newspaper pointing out the lack of unity among the Indians. He further analysed the political scene in India, and commented that the political subjugation of India by the British and the absence of Indianness among the people of India proved to be so much traumatic that the colonized Indians could hardly take up any political activities.[1] He, however, welcomed the attempts of the conservative Hindus to institutionalize their dissent against the Sati Regulation of 1829 into the *Dharma Sabha*.[2] *The Reformer*, in 1836, hailed the *Dharma Sabha* as the first political association of India, for it institutionally directed an agitation against a legal measure of the British Indian Government.[3] Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay, one of the founder-members of the *Dharma Sabha*, warned that the Hindus would not be guilty of any rebellion if the appeal against the Sati Regulation was set aside by the Privy Council in England.[4] He angrily accused the English of plotting to abolish the whole of Hindu religion and the society. Bhabani Charan considered the Government most inimical to the welfare of India and her people.[5] After the dismissal of the Sati appeal he muttered, "Lord William Bentinck has no compassion-and the King's councillors have no compassion-and the King himself has no compassion- and the whole English nation

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1. *Sambad Probhakar*, 2 March 1852, No. 4264, pp. 1-4, Microfilm Reel No.9, National Library, Calcutta.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Quoted in S.R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the National Congress*, Delhi, 1971, p.5.
4. *Samachar Darpan*, Vol. XIV, No.801, 14 November 1832, p.539, Microfilm Reel No.15, National Library, Calcutta.
5. *Samachar Darpan*, Vol. XIV, No.802, 17 November 1832, p.546.

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are without compassion for India."[6] The *Samachar Chandrika* expressing the conservative Hindu public opinion accused the Government of destroying the Hindu religion on one hand and badly administering the whole of India on the other. It particularly criticised, in 1843, Lord Ellenborough who promised India good government and agricultural improvements, but indulged in "unprecedented bloodshed in Sindh and Afghanistan."[7] It wrote that the Government had been cruelly dealing with both the Indian rulers and the people, and "we remained innocuous spectators to their misdeeds."[8] A Bengali daily made its readers feel that the British colonial Government could not be considered benevolent as it started predicting that the Indians after getting education would attempt to be independent of the British, and rise in revolt.[9] However, after the dismissal of the Sati appeal Bhabani Charan was really unhappy, and became disappointed. He wrote in the *Samachar Chandrika* that "the Hindoos will make their appeal to the great Sovereign of Kings who would, through conflagrations, innundations, drought, deluging rain, famine, plague, lightnings, the bursting of heavens, variances, confusions, and such like calamities, give the English lesson."[10] Bhabani Charan was in fact asking the Hindus to rise in revolt.[11] He was perhaps sure of a Hindu insurrection after the enactment of the Sati Regulation. He told, "if no war or such like should occur,...who could predict that?"[12] An exasperated Bhabani Charan thought that the Hindus after being deprived of their religious social custom would rather "commit suicide, though a sin, than to live being deprived of religion."[13] A section of the Conservative Hindus pointed out that the Sati Regulation had made them so disheartened and sad that they were looking for some really courageous and brave Hindus in "Oude, Nepal, Gwalior, Bombay, and Madras"[14] who could fight against the British. It was also commented that "the weak Hindus of

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6. *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XIV, No.801, 14 November 1832.
7. *Samachar Chandrika*, 27 July 1843, No.1863, Microfilm Reel No.12, National Library, Calcutta.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Sambad Purnachandrodaya*, Vol XVIII, 13 January 1853, p.3, Microfilm Reel No.12, National Library, Calcutta.
10. *Samachar Chandrika*, quoted in *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XIV, No.801, 14 November 1832, pp. 539-40.
11. *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XIV, No.810, 15 December 1832, p. 594, Microfilm Reel No.15, National Library, Calcutta.
12. Quoted in *Ibid.*
13. Quoted in *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XIV, No.802, 17 November 1832, p.546.
14. Quoted in *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XIV, No. 810, 15 November 1832, pp. 595-6.

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Bengal"[15] were incapable of preserving their religion; they would "do no harm to the King, they will pass their days praying that they may live long and prosper."[16] The pro-Government *Samachar Darpan* was certain that the Hindus could not rise in revolt. It wrote, "Had they possessed the ability to do so (rise in revolt), the Moosoolman princes could not have come and over thrown the Hindoos. Wherefore in that way their valour and power were displayed, and had the Government been aware of its existing in the smallest degree, they would never have published the Regulation (making the custom of Sati illegal). ...all Hindoos are exceedingly submissive to the Government."[17] It was, however, expected that the Hindus "will obey the laws, pay their taxes, and bless the Government that protects them from oppression, as they have done hitherto."[18] The British and their supporters in the columns of the *Samachar Darpan* and the *Friend of India* had been for long raising the bogey of `oppression' of the Hindus by the Muslims, and succeeded in making the Hindus believe that they were rescued by the British. It so happened that the conservative Hindus while accusing the British Indian Government of interfering with the Hindu religious customs and rituals praised[19] the Muslims for not attempting to abolish any Hindu rite by law. The British were not happy at the Hindu felicity for the Muslim rule.[20] An embryo of a Hindu-Muslim unity was thus formed in the fourth decade of the 19th century. The Government, however, took care that unity as such might not take place. T.H. Maddock of the English Company noted in 1843 that "as long as the British Government affords toleration and protection to all the religions which prevail in India, it can have little dread from occasional and partial outbreaks. Any attempts at interference in matters of religion might produce the most fatal consequences...the continued existence of our rule in any momentous crisis must ever depend upon the absence of nationality in India. We rule over a hundred million of subjects of various tribes and different religions as opposed to one another as the sects and the nations of Europe. All may have bent unwillingly to a foreign yoke whatever nation imposed it, but their mutual rivalries and antipathies are our surest safeguard, far surer than any extent of military force against all chance of our power ever being subverted by the people of the country."[20a]

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15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Samachar Darpan, Vol.XIV, No.801, 14 November 1832, p.540.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Quoted in *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XIV, No.802, 17 November 1832, p.546.
20. *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XIV, No.803, 21 November 1832, p.550, Microfilm Reel No. 15, National Library, Calcutta.

20a. *Foreign-Secret*, 10 May 1843, No.1.

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Lord William Bentinck did not take the Hindu submissiveness for granted. Before passing the Regulation banning the sati rite he enquired[21] whether it might endanger any insurrectionary feelings among the Indians He calculated in 1829 that of the 463 satis taking place "in the whole of the Presidency of Fort William, 420 took place in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa lacked courage and "habitual submission of centuries"[22] had made them incapable of "insurrection or hostile opposition to the will of the ruling power"[23] He, however, wanted to know the reactions of the Hindu soldiers working in the Company's armed forces. He was sure about the docility of the Hindu soldiers belonging to Bengal, Bihar and Orissa serving his army at that time. Bentinck decided to ascertain the views of 49 army officers regarding the probable impact of an anti-Sati Regulation on the Hindu soldiers stationed throughout British India. Only five of fortynine officers were against any sort of anti-Sati declaration. There were twelve officers who favoured abolition but not by any regulation of the Government. Eight officers thought that the *Sati* might be discouraged by the public officers. The numbers of the officers who advocated total, immediate and public suppression amounted to twentyeight.[24] Bentinck was probably correct in his calculation. The Sati issue had not brought about any insurrection. But as Rammohun Roy had told Bentinck the *Sati* enactment gave rise to an apprehension among the people. Rammohun thought that the people could think like this: "While the English were contending for power, they deemed it politic to allow universal toleration, and to respect our (people's) religion; but having obtained the supremacy, their first act is violation of their profession, and the next will probably be, like Mahomedan conquerors, to force upon their own religion."[25] Rammohun's very decent and polite note of dissent was not to be compared with that of Bhabani Charan. Bhabani Charan lost faith in the religious policy of the British Indian Government. He, as the Secretary of the *Dharma Sabha*, tried to prevent its members from joining the farewell meeting of Bentinck held on 30 January 1835. His persuasion did not have any effect on Gopimohun Deb, Radhakanta, Ram Kamal Sen and other conservative Hindus. The farewell meeting was presided over by Gopimohun who spoke eloquently praising the administra-

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21. Bentinck's minute on sati, dated 8 November 1829, quoted in C.H. Philips (ed.), *Op.cit*, p. 338.
22. Quoted in C.H. Philips (ed.), *op.cit.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. Rammohun Roy quoted by Bentinck in *Ibid.*

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tion of Bentinck.[26] The address presented to Bentinck was signed by, among others, all the prominent leaders of the *Dharma Sabha*. Bhabani Charan wrote in his *Samachar Chandrika* that "many have signed the address fearing that Lord William Bentinck might attack other parts of their religion."[27] The religious policy of the British and the Sati Regulation that were critically discussed in the *Dharma Sabha* were indeed the two political activities of the *Dharma Sabha*. It had no other political programme. It was also observed that of all its members Bhabani Charan was a hard liner, which neither Radhakanta nor Ram Kamal Sen appreciated. Subsequently, Bhabani Charan was dissociated from all other political activities of the elites of Calcutta.

2. The Landholders' Society and the Resumption of rent-free lands

Bhabani Charan used the columns of the *Samachar Chandrika* to carry on a tirade against the anti-Sati liberal Hindus and the Government. Radhakanta, Ram Kamal Sen and Raja Kali Krishna Deb bahadur, among other members of the *Dharma Sabha*, were not pleased with Bhabani Charan when he had been talking about revolt or advocating the boycott of the farewell meeting of the Governor General, Lord William Bentinck. Ram Kamal Sen at a meeting of the *Dharma Sabha*, held on 24 April 1836, criticised Bhabani Charan and proposed that the *Samachar Chandrika* would forthwith stop publishing controversial as well as dangerous politic and religious matters. He suggested, on the contrary, the establishment of an association - preferably a branch of the *Dharma Sabha* - where zamindary and other agricultural affairs of the country would be discussed for the benefit of all concerned.[28] Bhabani Charan as the Secretary of the *Dharma Sabha* declined to agree to the suggestion.[29] He might have thought that the inclusion of the zamindary issues in the existing programmes of the Sabha would defeat its main purpose of protecting or defending the Hindu religion. Bhabani Charan was overruled by the majority and the Sabha subsequently resolved that "a branch of the Dharma Sabha be forthwith established."[30] The efforts of Ram Kamal Sen were highly appreciated. He

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26. *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XVII, No.1021, 7 February 1835, pp.43-44, Microfilm Reel No.16, National Library, Calcutta.
27. *Samachar Darpan*, Vol.XVII, No.1024, 28 February 1835, p.68.
28. Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, 1830-1840, Vol.II, pp. 595-96.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, p.596.

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was especially commended for making the *Dharma Sabha*, "the Indian court of inquisition" into a useful political institution.[31] It was also considered a "triumph of reason in the very citadel of superstitution."[32] It was at this time that the zamindars of Bengal - most of whom possessed rent-free lands (lakhiraj) - were disturbed by the resumption of *lakhiraj* lands by the Government. A public meeting was subsequently held in January 1837 to protest against the resumption. Radhakanta and Prasanna Kumar Tagore were present at that meeting attended by eight thousand people.[33] Ram Kamal Sen, however, went ahead with his idea of founding a society of the landholders. Prasanna Kumar Tagore also, in 1833, advocated the establishment of an association of the landholders, which would protect "their interest by every legitimate and lawful means in their power."[34] A contemporary newspaper[35] wrote on 14 October 1837 that the society the zamindars were contemplating to establish would take up the resumption of rent-free lands and the promotion of the Bengali language in official transactions. The first meeting of the zamindars of Calcutta and its adjoining areas was held on 10 November 1837 at the Hindu College to discuss the propriety of founding a landholders' society.[36] The meeting unanimously decided to form an association of the landholders to protest and promote the landed interests of the country. A provisional committee with Radhakanta, Ram Kamal Sen, Bhabani Charan Mitra and Prasanna Kumar Tagore as its members was constituted to frame its rules and regulations. It was also decided that the association of the zamindars would be open to the people of "all description, without reference to caste, country or complexion"; the only qualification necessary to become its members would be "the possession of interest of the soil in the country."[37]

The association of the zamindars known as the Landholders' Society was formally inaugurated on 19 March 1838 at a public meeting at the Town Hall in Calcutta. It was attended by Radhakanta, Prasanna Kumar

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31. *The Reformer*, quoted in the *Asiatic Journal*, October 1836, p.68.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb Bahadur (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 41.
34. *The Reformer*, 16 June 1833, quoted in Chittabrata Palit, *Tensions in Bengal Rural Society: Landholders, Planters and Colonial Rule* -1830-1860, Calcutta, 1975, p. 38.
35. *Samachar Darpan*, 14 October 1837, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, 1830-1840, Vol.II, pp. 405-6.
36. *Ibid*; Bimanbehari Majumdar, *History of Political Thought: From Rammohun to Dayananda* (1821-1884), Vol.I: *Bengal*, University of Calcutta, 1934, p. 163; S.R. Mehrotra, *Op.cit.*, p.8.
37. *The Reformer*, 14 November 1837, quoted in S.R. Mehrotra, *op.cit.*, p.8

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Tagcre, Barodakanta Roy, Laxminaryan Mukhopadhyaya, Satya Charan Ghosal, Ram Kamal Sen, Raja Kali Krishna Deb Bahadur, Munshi Muhammad Amir, Kalinath Roy Chaudhury and also Theodore Dickens and David Hare. The inaugural meeting was presided over by Radhakanta. He stated, on taking the chair, that the honour of presiding over an assembly of zamindars of Bengal could have been accorded to the Maharaja of Nabadwip as he was the most ancient of all the zamindars of the area. Radhakanta also mentioned that after the Maharaja of Nabadwip, Raja Barodakanta of Jessore would have been a more right person to preside over that meeting of the landholders since the Jessore-Raj was definitely an older landed aristocracy than the Shovabazar Raj. But as the meeting desired, he would accept the honour of conducting it with all humility.[38] Radhakanta told his audience that all people at the beginning of the British rule in Bengal lived in peace, but the resumption of *lakhiraj* lands infused in them a sense of fear of the British administration. It was emphasized that the Society would do much good for the ryots as it would be "a proper channel of communication between the agricultural classes and the State."[39] Radhakanta in the course of his speech mentioned the policy of the Government *vis-a-vis* the landholders and ryots of the district 24-Parganas during the innundation[40] of 1833. He told that the Government first decided to exempt the flood-affected ryots from paying taxes, but later on demanded all arrears with interest. The Government, on the other hand, wrote Radhakanta a letter on 8 December 1835 stating that the exemption had been conditional that the zamindars would "bind themselves to abandon all demand from their ryots for any arrears which may appear in their accounts" for 1833.[41] The zamindars of 24-Parganas, according to R.D. Mangles (the Secretary to the Government of Bengal), had not been kind to their flood-affected ryots by abandoning their claims on them.[42] Hence the question of exemption did not exist for them. The Government, however, exempted some of the zamindars of 24-Parganas namely Jagatballav Chaudhury, Sambhu Chandra Kar Chaudhury, Naranarayan Ghosh and Durgadas Bhattacharya from paying interest in consideration of their humane conduct towards their suffering tenantry.[43]

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38. *The Friend of India*, Vol.IV, No.170, 29 March 1839, p.129.
39. Quoted in *The Bengal Hurkaru*, Vol. LXXVII, No.7653, Old Series, 10 January 1840, p.35, Microfilm Reel No.9, National Library, Calcutta.
40. *Home-Revenue Department*, 9 May 1836, Nos. 7-9.
41. R.D. Mangles to Radhakanta, dated 8 December 1835; and former to the Secretary, Sudder Board of Revenue, dated 23 June 1835, in *Home - Revenue Department*, 9 May 1836, Nos. 7-9.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*

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Moreover, the ryots of the Government *khas mahal* were exempted from paying revenues for the year 1833. Thus the Government as well as the zamindars claimed to be the well-wishers of the ryots. The Landholders' Society though declared to be an association representing the interests of the people of British India, yet it only channelized the interests of the zamindars. It may be observed during our study of resumption of rent-free lands that the ryots had even occasions to complain against their zamindars as the grantors of rent-free lands.

As a political association the Landholders' Society drew out a broad-based political programme. Radhakanta told that the Society was "to keep a watch over the measures of Government and its functionaries, and for the purpose of making representation in it."[44] The Society would also guide, he declared, the people of British India in bringing their grievances to the notice of the Government. Radhakanta hinted that "if the object of Government be good of the people, and the Society subserved that end, it was evident that the Government could not but consider it as beneficial both to itself and to the country at large."[45] On its inaugural day an Executive Committee of the Society was selected on the proposal of Ram Kamal Sen. Radhakanta was one of its members.[46] While the *Reformer*, the *Bengal Herald*, the *Bengal Hurkaru and the Indian Gazette* welcomed the Landholders' Society, the *Friend of India* was full of cynicism and black looks for it. The *Friend of India* asked "would not the Landholders' Society be to create an imperium in imperio; a Councillor near the throne, the natural tendency of whose course would be to acquire a power greater than the throne itself?"[47] It doubted whether the Landholders' Society would be a worthy representative of all connected with the soil. When there was a proposal to include the English Indigo Planters within the fold of the Landholders' Society, the *Friend of India* objected to it.[48] It hoped that the Society would not be allowed to become a prominent organization of "an irresponsible oligarchy of the landholders of Calcutta."[49] On the formation of the Planters'

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44. *The Bengal Hurkaru*, 21 March 1838, quoted in S.R. Mehrotra, *op.cit*, pp. 9-10.
45. *Ibid.*
46. The other members of the Executive Committee were Prasanna Kumar TAgore, Satyacharan Ghosal, Raja Rajnarayan, Raja Kalikrishna Deb Bahadur, Ashutosh Deb, Ramratan Roy, Ram Kamal Sen, Dwarkanath Tagore, Munshi Muhammad Amir, George Prinsep and Theodore Dickens.
47. *The Friend of India*, 9 January 1840, quoted in *Bengal Hurkaru*, Vol.LXXVII, No.7652, Old Series, 10 January 1840, p.35.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*

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Association - an association of the British landed interests - on 10 December 1839,[50] the *Friend of India* was happy that the Landholders' Society would not be considered "the sole channel of communication with the entire agricultural community of the country".[51] There was a belief in the English official circle and shared by the *Friend of India* that at the time of the Permanent Settlement "Ryots were handed over in the gross to the zamindars" and since then no attempt had been made "to reconcile the interests of the zamindars and the cultivators", and therefore the Landholders' Society would not be given any "commanding position" by the Government.[52] The English spokesmen like the *Friend of India* might have thought that the Permanent Settlement while making the position of the zamindars stable had not adequately looked after the interests of the cultivators. Under these circumstances, if the Government would listen to the demands of the Landholders' Society - like withholding the resumption operations - it would be an unjust policy of promoting the interests of the landholders at the cost of the ryots. As the *Samachar Darpan* had assured the British that the anti-Government vituperations of the *Samachar Chandrika*, the mouthpiece of the *Dharma Sabha*, were only paper-threats, so the *Friend of India*[53] advised the Government not to get panicky at the establishment of the Landholders' Society by the Bengalis who did not possess "one element of political resistance in them". It further wrote that the Society was "no Canadian assembly with a Papineau[54] to breathe hostility into its Councils. It wrote that the Landholders' Society "is a large association of great Baboos, most of whom are too unwieldy for any treasonable views."[55] The *Calcutta Courier* apprehended that the Society would one day get an Indian national leader like Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847) of Ireland.[56] The liberal Bengalis were, however, happy that Lord Auckland, the Governor-General (from 1836-1842) had approved of the formation of the Landholders' Society as a `Corporate body'.[57]

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50. *The Friend of India*, 9 January 1840; also *Bengal Harkaru*, Vol. LXXVII, No.7658, Old Series, 17 January 1840.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *The Friend of India*, 15 March 1838, quoted in S.R. Mehrotra, *op.cit.*, p.10.
54. Louis- Joseph Papineau (1786-1871), leader of unsuccessful French Canadian revolt against British Government in lower Canada in 1837.
55. *The Friend of India*, 15 March 1838, quoted in S.R. Mehrotra, *op.cit.*, p.10.
56. *Calcutta Courier*, 19 March 1838, quoted in *Ibid.*
57. S.R. Mehrotra, *op.cit.*, p.10.

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The Landholders' Society constituted a few sub-committees to look into the land problems of Bengal. Radhakanta was a member of one of the sub-committees. He was to see the landed interests of Bakharganj, Kachar, Faridpur, Jayanti, Mymensing and Sylhet.[58] It was subsequently arranged that the mofussil members of the Society would report to it on the judicial, police, revenue, commercial and agricultural state of affairs of their respective areas. The Society even successfully established contact with the British India Society in England. Initially John Crawford was the agent of the Landholders' Society in England, but George Thompson (the famous Scottish agitator, born 1804; Orator, M.P. 1847-52; visited India 1842-3 and 1856-7; died 1878) replaced Crawford on the proposal of Radhakanta and it was seconded by Dwarkanath Tagore.[59] At home in Bengal the most important political action the society took up was the protest against the resumption of rent-free lands by the Government. It presented in 1838 a petition signed by twenty thousand people. It was adopted at a public meeting attended by five thousand people. The petition appealed for the revocation of resumption operations. It was well reasoned and full of subtle legal points. Before we deal with the steps the Landholders' Society had taken to fight against the Government in connection with its resumption operations, it is worthwhile to follow the state of *lakhiraj* lands in Bengal in the first half of the 19th century.

Originally, all the *lakhiraj* lands were legal and service tenures granted by the rulers or local administrators to institutions or individuals for their services to the society. The following[60] were the major varieties of *lakhiraj* lands. First, *aim* a land granted by the Mughal Government to learned and charitable uses. Second, *altamgha* "a grant under the royal seal conferring a title to rent free land in perpetuity, hereditary and transferrable."[61] Third, *chakran* land held rent-free in remuneration of service, "but especially that of village servants such as the *qanungo, patwari*, the peons, and *chaukidars*."[62] Fourth, *brahmottara* land granted rent-free to Brahmans for their support. Fifth, *devottara* land granted rent-free for the support of a temple. Sixth, *inam* land "held rent-free in hereditary and perpetual occupation."[63] Seventh, *madad-mash* land granted in "perpetuity under the

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58. Chittabrata Palit, *op.cit.*, p.42.
59. *The Bengal Spectator*, Vol.II, No.25, 1 August 1843, pp. 222-23.
60. S.N. Sen (ed.), *Imperial Record Department: Index to the Land Revenue*, 1830-1837, Delhi, 1940, pp. 93-120.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*

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royal seal for subsistence."[64] There were a few other rent-free grants like *bhatottar*, *vritti*, *mahattran* and *mittaki*.[65] *Kharidamuaffi* lands claiming exemption from "revenue as having been bought under that condition"[66] did also create problems for the resumption operations. The holders of all these rent-free lands were categoried under two heads. They were (1) *badshahi-minhaidar* or holders of *lakhiraj* lands under royal grants, and (2) *hukkami-minhaidar* or possessors of rent-free lands "under grants made by officers of Government or zamindars."[67] Under these circumstances, the Company administration, since its achievement of *Diwani* in 1765, became aware of the existence of a considerable amount of rent-free lands with proved to be mostly *hukkami*. The Company officials concluded that "the whole-sale alienation of land must have originated at a date subsequent to the transfer of the revenues of this province (Bengal) to the Company."[68] The *Friend of India*[69] seemed to have studied the case of *lakhiraj* lands in Bengal providing the Government background-history or rent-free lands. It wrote that "four years after the acquisition of the Dewanny on the 16th August 1769, the Government made the first attempt to acquire some knowledge of the revenues which belonged to it, and adopted the first efforts to restrain the wholesale alienation which had been carried on."[70] The supervisors were also instructed to take an account of rent-free lands in their respective areas. During the quinquennial settlement of revenues with the zamindars in April 1772 there was a clause in every lease that the zamindars would not grant any rent-free lands.[71]

Warren Hastings, in 1782, decided to take some effective measures to check unjust alienation of lands which "threatened to swallow up the whole rental of Bengal, and eventually to leave the Government of the country the only party without any interest in its revenues."[72] He established, on 31 May 1782, the *Baze Zamin Daftar* for the registry of all categories of *lakhiraj* lands to distinguish the real from the fraudulent tenures. James

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64. *Ibid.*
65. Chittabrata Palit, *op.cit.*, p.29.
66. S.N. Sen (ed.), *op.cit.*,
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Home-Revenue Department, Governor-General's Proceedings*, January 1839, Nos. 1-4.
69. *The Friend of India*, Vol.IV, No.206, 6 December 1838.
70. *Ibid*, also Baden-Powell, *The Land-Syatems of British India*, Vol.I, Reprint: New Delhi, 1974, pp. 423-27.
71. *Home-Revenue, Governor-General's Proceedings*, January 1839, Nos. 1-4.
72. *The Friend of India*, Vol.IV, No.206, 6 December 1838.

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Grant was sure that "the wholesale alienation of millions of acres was not made during the administration"[73] of the Nawabs of Bengal, but during "the first fifteen or twenty years of our (the Company's) rule."[74] However, on the 1st December 1790 a proclamation was issued to the people, which stated that all grants since the *Diwany*, and not confirmed, were invalid. These lands were consequently liable to be resumed. At the time of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 the same proclamation was re-issued. In 1803, 1819, 1825 and 1828 the revenue officials were directed to take steps to assert "the inalienable right of the Government to tenures which had been fraudulently created since the accession of the British Government in-power."[75] The Government also declared that all the *badshahi* and *hukkami* - grant made before 1765 would be respected.

In 1838 the Government once again started resumption operations. These operations were more vigorous and thorough than what they had been before. The Landholders' Society objected to the *modus operandi* of these resumption measures which were really 'obnoxious'[76] to the people. It took particular exceptions to the appointments of Special Deputy Collectors and Special Commissioners for quick disposal of resumption cases, who were in a great hurry to resume as much lands as possible. The Society further contended that "the right of Government to Lakhiraj tenure is a question in the first instance not of Revenue but of law, and should be decided in the Judicial Department."[77] It requested the Government not to try resumption cases through the Special Deputy Collectors, and they be tried before regular Judicial Tribunals. The Society wondered how the facade of justice would be maintained when the Special Deputy Collectors were simultaneously acting as the public prosecutors and Judges while deciding resumption questions. They were, moreover, too young and inexperienced to administer justice impartially. The British Special Deputy Collectors were assisted by Indian Deputy Collectors like Gobinda Chandra Kar Chaudhury, Prananath Bose, Taraknath and Benimadhab Ghosh who were appointed on 18 September 1838.[78] The Landholders' Society had not

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73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. Petition of the Landholders' Society, dated 19 August 1839, quoted in *Home-Revenue Department, Governor-General's Proceedings*, December 1839 Nos. 20-22.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Revenue Consultation*, 15 June 1839, Nos. 15-16; also S. Sengupta, "A Note on Resumption of Lakheraj Lands in Bengal and the Landholders' Society" in *Indian History Congress, Proceedings of the Fortythird Session*, Kurukshetra-1982, 1983, pp. 487-93.

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objected to the appointments of Indian Deputy Collectors. They were to assist William Taylor, the Special Deputy Collector of Bardhaman, Hughly, Birbhum and Bankura. Taylor became notorious for his highhanded method of conducting resumption operations.[79] Like Taylor, Elliot in Patna was equally accused of adopting illegal resumption of rent-free holdings. Their irregular handling of resumption operations were pointed out by the Landholders' Society. The landholders in their petition told the Government that the resumption cases had plunged the people "into a harassing experience and never ending litigation with its own Government". Even Government officials like Halliday reprimanded Elliot for the resumption of such lands which had been held rent-free prior to the 12th August 1765. Thus Elliot was acting contrary to the provision of Section II of Regulation XIX, 1793.[80] The Court of Directors did censure Elliot for his illegal actions in connection with the resumption affairs.[81] Taylor in Hughly was officially known as an officer in a hurry to resume lands illegally.[82] While to the Landholders' Society the question of resumption was primarily a matter of law, it to the Government was an administrative measure of raising revenues. From Verelst to Marquis of Hastings all the Governors and Governor-Generals thought that resumption of rent-free lands would increase the revenue-incomes of the Government, which were so long being held up by the landholders. Consequently, the resumption officials motivated by this idea attached little importance to the resumption laws and procedures laid down in 1793. Regulation XIX of 1793 stipulated that the legality of rent-free lands would be decided in the ordinary courts of justice. But in practice the resumption cases were being decided in the special resumption courts constituted at a later date where the official as plaintiff sat in judgement and asked *lakhirajdars* to defend themselves against him. These officials were prejudiced regarding the existence of a "quantity of land which the zamindars have usurped from the Government and enjoyed for their own use and advantage free of rent. (Therefore) all lands which are found to have been illegally dismembered, are to be reannexed."[83] The Landholders' Society in their petition reminded the Government that the revenue officials were supposed to prepare, as per the regulations, a register of *lakhiraj* lands, but they had performed the job most perfunctorily. Often they lost the original documents submitted by the *lakhirajdars* for registration. There was

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79. *Revenue - Governor-General's Consultation*, August 1839, Nos. 7A-7B.
80. Halliday to Elliot, dated 28 May 1839, in *Revenue - Consultations*, 28 October 1839, Nos. 3-19.
81. *Revenue-Consultations*, 30 August 1841, Nos. 1-2.
82. *Revenue-Consultations*, 3 February 1840, Nos.1-7.
83. Foreign - Secret Committee (India Office Copy), 1765-69, 20 A.

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thus an absolute neglect in carrying into effect the registering clauses of the *lakhiraj* regulations. The Landholders' Society pointed out that the regulation of "Registry of lands alienated prior to the 12th August 1765" was reasonable in 1793, but "that which might have been an easy task in 1793 is an impossibility in 1839."[84] The Government in its reply to the petition submitted by the Landholders' Society denied the allegations relating to the registry of rent-free lands. It stated that the reports from the Collectors in 1799 proved that there were proclamations for registry in at least 22 districts like Bardhaman, Murshidabad, Calcutta, Purnia, Mymensingh, Chittagong, Midnapur, Rangpur etc. and thousands were produced for registry.[85] The Government refuted all the points of mismanagement raised by the Society. But revenue records show that all was not well with resumption operations - there was a gap between administrative objectives and performances. The Landholders' Society, in their petition had shown from the records of the Government that the 'pecuniary profit 'derived from the resumption of rent-free lands in 1836-37 was most insignificant (Table A).

The Revenue Department of the Government being aware of the sufferings of the holders of the invalid *badshahi lakhiraj* tenures which were resumed under Section 6, Regulation 37 of 1798, suggested pensions for them as they were "suddenly exposed to severe distress in consequence of Resumptions."[86] Pensions were to be granted for a fixed period not exceeding 30 years, but those who had other means of subsistence were denied such relief.[87] Compassionate attitude as such was gradually revealed in the resumption operations. The Court of Directors, nevertheless, since 1833 had been repeatedly asking the Government[88] to compromise its claims in preference to enforcing them by legal process.[89] They wrote that gross injustice had already been done "by extensive Resumption without due and often without any investigation."[90] But the proposal of compromise did not get support from officials like Elliot in Patna and Board of Revenue. The Government, however, had to explore it in view of the instructions from the Court. H.T. Princep was also in favour of allowing concessions to the *lakhirajdars*. He thought the resumption laws were

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84. *Revenue - Governor General's Proceedings* 1839, Nos. 20-22.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Revenue - Consultations*, 8 February 1836, Nos. 10-12.
87. *Ibid.*
88. *Revenue - Consultations*, 11 June 1838, Nos. 1-4.
89. *Revenue- Governor General's Consultations*, January 1839, Nos. 1-4.
90. *Revenue - Consultations*, 3 February 1840, Nos. 1-7.

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generally faulty and being carried out in great haste. He suggested "the concessions whatever they may be should be embodied in a producible document, a copy of which may be furnished to the Landholders' Society or any other public body."[91]

The Government revised on the 10th August 1840 resumption regulations alleviating hardships of some of the holders of rent-free lands. The first resolution contended that lands not exceeding 10 *bighas* held under any grant were not resumed "if the produce have been appointed to any endowment or to any religious or charitable purpose without interruption since the 1st December 1790."[92] It was also resolved that "In the case of lands held under Badshahee title (and) if the possession since 12th August 1765 in Bengal, Behar and Orissa and since 1791 in Cuttack be consecutive and uninterrupted under a title declared and known as derived from Badshahee grant, such title not to be questioned."[93]

The Government further decided that there would be no resumption on the ground that the *lakhiraj* lands had not been registered "except in districts in which Registers duly prepared exist to be produced."[94] There was another concession which laid down that the resumed rent-free lands were to be assessed at half *jumma* calculated upon the rent-roll of the *lakhirajdars*.[95] Many senior Government officials like W.W. Bird objected to treat these concessions in the form of `Resolutions'. They thought that these concessions could only be intimated to the Resumption officers in the form of `Instructions', but according to the suggestion of H.T. Prinsep these concessions were embodied in `Resolutions' and passed on to the Landholders' Society "who have already on this very question assumed an

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91. *Revenue - Proceedings* : 6 July - 31 August 1840.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.* Registration of rent-free lands was prescribed in:-
    Regulation 19 of 1793
    Regulation 37 of 1793
    Regulation 41 of 1795
    Regulation 42 of 1795
    Regulation 31 of 1803
    Regulation 36 of 1803
    Regulation 12 of 1805
    Regulation 7 of 1808.
95. The resumption of rent-free *chakaran* lands in the 70's of the 18th century created such administrative and social problems that Warren Hastings decided on 19 April 1774 that "Chakran zemeen... which have been resumed and included in the jumma, may be again separated from it and applied to their original design".
    Source: W.K. Firminger, *Historical Introduction to the Bengal Portion of the Fifth Report*, Calcutta, 1917; Indian Studies - Past & Present Reprint, 1962, p. 248.

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Table - A

Abstract Statement of collections and receipts of Lakhiraj lands resumed in Lower Provinces

Dr.		Cr.		
Charges Muffasil -	60,000			
		1	2	3
Charges Special Deputy Collectors and their establishments -	3,00,000	Gross Collection from the following districts including disputed claims under investigation - 4,75,000	Deduct rent collection of lands newly assessed and heretofore lying waste including Taufer, Noabadee, Jangalabadee, Halabadee, Jangalchars and the like - 1,45,000	Residue being exclusively from resumed lands heretofore held rent-free or at an unadequate Jumma or quit rent including Jagirs and the like - 3,30,000
Charges Sudder Special Commissioner and their establishments -	1,00,000			
	4,60,000			
Deduct proportion of expense on 1,45,000 Rupees excluded from the account vide column No.2 in the credit side	-1,44,200			
	3,15,000			
Net Income -	Rs.14,200			

Districts in column 1 of the Cr. side:-
Bengal Province:
Hughly, Murshidabad, Pabna, Birbhum, Sylhet, Tripura, Bagyra, Backurganj, Nadia, Burdwan, Malda, Burdwan, Malda, Rajmahal, Dacca, Rangpur, Rajshani, 24-Parganas.

Behar Province:
Mongheyar, Saraa, Bhagalpur.

Orissa Province:
Cuttack- Northern, Southern and Central.

Burma:
Goalpara, Darang.

Source: *Revenue Department, Governor General's Consultation*, December 1839, Nos. 20-22.

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attitude of dictation towards the Government."[96] The Society received a copy of the Resolutions incorporating the revised rules of resumption of *lakhiraj* lands. It was a vindication of the stand of the Landholders' Society regarding the faulty resumption laws and subsequent mismanagement of resumption operations. The Government also decided in 1851 to repeal the procedural Regulation 3 of 1828 which had earlier marked the beginning of all quick and unjustified resumption of rent-free tenures.[97] From the Company's point of view the resumption of *lakhiraj* lands might have been a sound revenue policy of tapping hidden economic resources in large areas of rent-free tenures, but the highhanded and impatient attitude of its resumption officials could only alienate the zamindars and the *lakhirajdars* who were united in the Landholders' Society. The Company in fighting an economic evil gave, unwittingly, a legal battle, which was won by the Landholders' Society.

The resumption question, on one the hand, directly involved the zamindars and the Government, and on the other the former and the ryots. The zamindars successfully fought, during 1838-40 the resumption question from a legal point of view, but the legal relationship between the ryots and the zamindars as the recipient and the grantors of *lakhiraj* lands respectively became controversial in the 50's of the 19th century. Since the Permanent Settlement the Government officials and the Court of Directors had been reiterating their resolve to protect the ryots from the "extortion of the zamindars".[98] In 1856 the Government took an administrative move to repeal the Section 10 of Regulation XIX of 1793, which empowered the zamindars to dispossess the *lakhirajdars* under their jurisdiction. This power of dispossessing was absolute, because they could do it without any reference to the Government.[99] The Board of Revenue were subsequently requested to state their opinion on the operation of Section 10 Regulation of XIX of 1793. They replied that the Collectors of Hughly, Bhagalpur and Tippera and the Deputy Collectors of Bankura, Barasat and Malda were of the opinion that the zamindars were more or less oppressive to their *lakhirajdars*. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal meanwhile decided that the "Section 10 is contrary to sound principle and at least opens a door to abuse. It should, therefore, be repealed".[100] It was, however, stated that there were only a few instances of zamindari oppression. The Board of Revenue believed that the zamindars would surely resume those *lakhiraj*

96. *Revenue - Proceedings*: 6 July - 31 August 1840.
97. *Revenue - Proceedings*: July-December 1852.
98. *Revenue - Consultations*, 28 January 1832, Nos.46-58.
99. *Home - Revenue Consultations*, 7 January 1859, Nos. IA.
100. *Home - Revenue Consultations*, 7 March 1856, Nos. 1-3.

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lands which were fraudulently created in their zamindaris.[101] It is interesting that while the Government had been investigating zamindari excesses on their own *lakhirajdars*, some anonymous ryots of Dwarbasini village of Hughly in a petition to the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, complained against their zamindars, Jaykirshna and Rajkrishna Mukherji about their oppression.[102] (Jaykrishna was a prominent member of the Landholders' Society). The ryots wrote about the zamindari oppression they had been subject to and prayed for relief and rehabilitation. They stated in their petition that their rent-free lands were forcibly assessed by their zamindars, Jaykrishna and Rajkrishna Mukherji who had jointly purchased the zamindari of Dwarbasini in 1853. The ryots further wrote that the zamindars subsequently "ordered for the extortion of revenues from the Rent-free or lakhraj land of your poor memorialists, which they have in possession for at last 5 or 6 generations (though under Act I of 1845, the Baboos are not entitled to assess the Rent free lands, or to enhance the Revenue) and in so doing they have not spared any kind of cruelty and inhumanity."[103] The petitioners apprehended that "even the honor of the Females are not safe in their zamindaree". They told that they were afraid of retaliatory steps by the zamindars if they moved a Court of Law for relief. They told the Governor-General that "the tyrannical behavior and inhuman practices of the Baboos (Jaykrishna and Rajkrishna Mukherji) are almost known to every public officer"[104] in Hughly. The ryots, therefore, were expecting positive official intervention for the redress of their grievances. The petition was subsequently referred to the officiating Magistrate of Hughly, who reported that there were land disputes between the ryots and the zamindars in Dwarbasini village and "tact on the part of the police is required to keep the peace between the rival parties."[105] The Government later on in 1859 made the zamindars *vis-a-vis* their *lakhirajdars* powerless by repealing Section 10 of Regulation XIX of 1793. Thus while the Landholders' Society got concessions and some of the resumption laws withdrawn in their favour, the Government retaliated by depriving them of their summary powers of dispossessing their lakhirajdars.

Meanwhile in January 1843, the famous Scotish agitator, George

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101. *Ibid.*
102. *Home - Revenue Consultations*, 23 May 1856, Nos. 5-7; also S. Sengupta, "Resumption of Rent-free Lands in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa: 1831-1859 - Records in the National Archives of India, New Delhi", in *The Indian Archives*, No.2, July-December 1984, pp. 19-31.
103. *Home - Revenue Consultations*, 23 May 1856, Nos. 5-7.
104. *Ibid.*
105. Officiating Magistrate of Hughly to C.E. Buckland, Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated 13 May 1856, quoted in *Ibid.*

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Thompson came to Calcutta in company with Dwarkanath Tagore. George Thompson took an interest in the activities of the Landholders' Society. He also did address a series of weekly meetings at the Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge, Krishamohun Benerji's house, Sri Krishna Singh's Villa, Agri-Horticultural Society, the Mechanics' Institute and 31, Faujdari Balakhana. The members of the Landholders' Society were so impressed by his understanding of Indian problems that he was chosen as the Society's representative in London. During his weekly meetings with the elite of Calcutta the idea of the Bengal British India Society was popularised. In one of the meetings George Thompson told that the proposed Bengal British India Society would not disturb the operations of the Landholders' Society, neither would it be its rival institution.[106] He emphasised that "the Society proposed to be formed was one for the acquisition and diffusion of information on many other subjects besides that of the land-revenue, and would not limit its enquiries to subjects connected with the Bengal provinces exclusively."[107] George Thompson also hoped that the proposed Society would look after the welfare of India. Dakshinaranjan Mukherji (1814-1878) in one of the meetings addressed by George Thompson on 13 April 1843 did also speak about the propriety of establishing the Bengal British India Society. He, however, criticised the Government for entering into the Permanent Settlement in 1793, which made them the "proprietors of landed estates" and consequently sacrificed the rights of the ryots.[108] Syamacharan Sen, a well wisher of the ryots, was of the opinion that there were three causes of "the distressed condition of ryots: 1st, oppression of zamindars; 2nd oppression of wealthy neighbours; 3rd, their own ignorance."[109] Following a very detailed discussion on the relationship between the zamindars and ryots it was resolved that some institutional measures might be taken to bridge "the existing disconnection between the zamindar and ryot"[110] and protect the interests of both. However, all these discussions and meetings led to a public meeting held on the 20th April 1843 at 31, Faujdari Balakhana inaugurating the Bengal British India Society. The inaugural meeting was chaired by George Thomspon, and it was resolved that "a Society be now formed and denominated the Bengal British India Society."[111] The objectives of the Society would be "the collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India, and the Laws,

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106. *The Bengal Spectator*, Vol.II, Nos. 4 & 5, February and March 1843, p. 52, Microfilm Reel No.8, National Library, Calcutta.
107. *Ibid.*
108. *The Bengal Spectator*, Vol.II, 17 April 1843, p. 109.
109. *Ibid.*
110. *Ibid.*
111. *The Bengal Spectator*, Vol.II, No.12, 25 April 1843, p.117.

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institutions, and Resources of the country; and to employ such other means, of a peaceable and lawful character..to secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes" of people of British India.[112]

The Bengal British India Society was more a forum for information collection and dissemination than a political association like the Landholders' Society. George Thompson at the very establishment of the Society told his audience that, "For the work of agitation and petitioning, as carried on in England, you are not prepared. You have no representative body, no *public*, in the English sense of the word". He advised the members of the Landholders' Society and the young radicals of Calcutta to take an account of the ills and wants of their people, and pass on the information to the British friends of India, like George Thompson, in England, who then would convince the British and the Parliament of the Indian condition and demands.[113] George Thompson was not perhaps aware at that time that the Landholders' Society had already achieved success in the work of petitioning in connection with resumption operations. What he had been attempting at was to impart the colonised Indians a paternalistic training in political education.

3. The British Indian Association:

The Landholders' Society though successfully fought the resumption question, its objectives were generally limited to the land problems and served the landed interests. The Bengal British India Society as a forum for collection of information on all aspects of British India brought forth an all Indian awareness. The zamindars and the intellectuals, jointly contributed towards an awakening of political consciousness among the elites of Bengal, which necessitated a political organization representing Indian hopes and aspirations. The Indian problems would also to be brought to the notice of not only the Governor-General of India but also the British Parliament. Inspite of such an emergent political awareness among the educated people in Bengal, the Bengali press lamented the absence of any political activities. It, wondered why the petitioning activities of the Landholders Society had stopped or why the lively debates and discussion at the Bengal British India Society were no longer heard in 1848.[114] The *Sambad Probhakar* added in 1851 that the Charter to the East India Company was going to be renewed in 1853, and the leaders who had led the Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society were expected to come forward

112. *Ibid.*
113. Quoted in S.R. Mehrotra, *op.cit.*, p.30.
114. *Sambad Probhakar*, No. 3090, 12 April 1848, pp. 15-16.

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with their programmes of service to the people of India, and present them to the British authorities.[115] It was emphasised that the Charter Act of 1833 had though declared equal opportunities for the Indians irrespective of caste, creed and colour, yet in practice the ruling British had been exploiting the Indians. Quoting the *Times* of London the *Sambad Prabhakar* wrote that the British policy was also criticised in England.[116] There was, however, an explicit idea among the leaders of the society - like Debendranath Tagore and Prasanna Kumar Tagore - that a concerted political movement was to be started on the eve of the renewal of the Charter. At the initial stage there was an attempt to revive the Landholders' Society. A meeting of the zamindars was subsequently held on 14 September 1851, and an organization called the 'National Association' was formed.[117] Debendranath Tagore was its Honorary Secretary. Within 45 days from its inception the British Indian Association was established on 29 October 1851. Debendranath was its Honorary Secretary as well, it is presumed that the National Association was re-christened as the British Indian Association; but what accounted for the re-christening has not yet been fully ascertained.[118] It might be that the name 'British Indian Association' appeared to its founders to be more indicative of an organisation representing the whole of India under the British. Soon after its establishment Debendranath wrote a letter, on 11 December 1851, to the eminent men in Madras requesting them to open a branch of the British Indian Association there. He stressed the point that "There are advantages likely to flow from the union of the Native gentlemen of the other three Presidencies with the British Indian Association".[119] Debendranath hoped the British Indian Association would be able to petition on the eve of the renewal of the Charter to the British Parliament incorporating the demands of the Indians. His letter was read at a public meeting at Madras and a branch association was opened. Its main objectives were to promote friendly and fruitful relations between Great Britain and India, and "ameliorate the conditions of the native inhabitants of the subject country" India.[120] A branch of the British Indian Association was also established in Awadh "to take every lawful and constitutional measure so to help Her Majesty's administration in Hindoostan and especially in Oudh

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115. *Sambad Probhakar*, No.4086, 26 July 1851, p.2, Microfilm Reel No.9, National Library, Calcutta.
116. *Sambad Probhakar*, No.4247, 11 February 1852, p.1.
117. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Debendranath Tagore*, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta, 1364 (B.S.), pp. 62-7; S.R. Mehrotra, *op.cit.*, p.51.
118. *Ibid.*
119. Quoted in C.F. Anddrews and Girija Mukerji, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India*, London, 1938, p.105.
120. Proceedings of the Madras Branch of the British Indian Association and of the Deccan Association, quoted in C.F. Andrews and Girija Mukerji, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

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that it may prove conducive to the welfare equally of the people of Britain and this country".[121] A large number of the taluqdars of Awadh joined the Association. Daksina Ranjan Mukherji acted as its Honorary Secretary.[122] In Aligarh the British Indian Association of North-Western Provinces was formed in 1866. They, on 16 October 1866, petitioned to the Governor-General of India drawing his attention to the most painful and uncomfortable railway travelling experienced by the Indian travellers. They also wrote about unfriendly behavior and bad manners of the railway officials towards the Indian passengers who had to wait for hours for the trains in the railway stations without shelter and accommodation, food and drinking water.[123]

In Calcutta the British Indian Association was inaugurated on 29 October 1851 with Raja Satya Charan Ghosal of Bhukailash presiding. The association adopted a constitution consisting of forty-seven clauses based upon those of its predecessor body, the National Association. It was announced that the association was being formed for a period of three years from 1851. Its most important programmes were to make representation to the British Parliament in connection with renewal of the Charter "with a view to remove the existing defects in the laws and civil administrations"[124] of India, and to promote the welfare of the people. The inaugural meeting also constituted the Committee of the Association with Raja Pratap Chandra Singh, Raja Satya Charan Ghosal, Hara Kumar Tagore, Ramanath Tagore, Durga Charan Datta, Joykrishna Mukherji, Harimohan Sen, Ashutosh Deb, Ramgopal Ghosh as members; and Debendranath Tagore and Digambar Mitra as Secretary and Assistant Secretary respectively. On behalf of the British Indian Association Debendranath requested Radhakanta and Kalikrishna Deb to become its President and Vice-President respectively. Radhakanta wrote a letter to Debendranath accepting the offer of the Presidentship of the British Indian Association. He wrote that he felt honoured by accepting the offer of the Presidentship, though due to his old age he would not be able to take an active part in the proceedings of the Association. Radhakanta informed Debendranath that "the necessity of the formation of a well-organized society to represent the wants and grievances of our country before the British Parliament has too long been felt but it grows imperative on so momentous an occasion as the termination of the East India Company's Chrter. The noble obiects therefore contemplated by the

121. Quoted in *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*
123. *Public Works Department, Railway 'A'*, November 1866, Nos. 17-22.
124. P.M. Singh Roy (ed.), *Chronical of the British Indian Association* (1851-1952), Calcutta, n.d., p.6.

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Society cannot but receive my hearty concurrence".[125] He reflected on the activities of the Landholders' Society, the Bengal British India Society and the National Association, and continued, "As the attempts which have hitherto been made by our countrymen in furtherance of (the interests of the people) have proved abortive, I trust the Society will be guided by such sound principles as to secure the permanent existence and give efficiency to all its proceedings".[126]

The petition with which the British Indian Association started, in 1852, its political work of petitioning to the British Parliament related to the East India Company's Charter coming up for renewal in Parliament in 1853. It first categorised the defects of the Charter Act of 1833 which did not promote public works, encourage Indian manufacture and commerce, provide for the improvement of the judiciary and police. The British Indian Government had not also made any provisions for the appointment of Indians to higher Government offices in contravention of the Section 87 of the Charter Act of 1833.[127] The petition submitted, (1) that the future management of Indian affairs ought to be vested in one body consisting of not more than twelve members; (2) that the functions of the Supreme Government might be limited to the disposal of political and military affairs, a control over the Governors of the Presidencies, and a veto on the laws passed by the Legislative Council in India; (3) that the Legislature of India would be a body not only distinct from the persons in whom the political and executive powers were vested, but also possessing a popular character representing the public opinion; (4) that a Legislative Council could be constituted at Calcutta composed of seventeen members, three selected from the most respectable and knowledgeable persons of each Presidency; one member appointed by the Governor of each Presidency from among the senior Civil officers, and one appointed by the Crown over the Council, quite independent of the control of the Government.[128] The petitioners further pointed out that "though the revenue raised by the Company both from the land and from other sources far exceeds what drawn from the country by its Mahomedan rulers, a very inadequate portion of it is devoted to improvements in the means of land and water communications."[129] There was a strong objection as well on the "support of bishops and other highly paid

125. Radhakanta to Debendranath, dated 7 November 1851, quoted in Jogesh C. Bagal, "Pre- Mutiny Political Institutions of Calcutta: Early History of the British Indian Association", *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, Vol.XXXVI, No.8, 11 July 1942, pp. 235-36.
126. *Ibid.*
127. C.F. Andrews and Girija Mukerji, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-2.
128. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.
129. *Ibid.*

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functionaries out of the general revenue of the country" when the Government of the Company "is for a mixed community, the members of which are of opposite sects and the majority composed of Hindoos and Mahomedans."[130] Radhakanta wanted the Association to include the objection of the Hindus against the Lex Loci Act which made the converted Indians legally capable of inheriting their ancestral property.[131] The petitioners, however, by criticising the Government expenditure on ecclesiastical establishments made the point more political than communal.

On the eve of the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1853 the contemporary Indian press in Calcutta did also start taking a profit and loss account of the British rule in India. The *Sambad Probhakar* accused the Company of depriving the Indians of their wealth. It asked why the British with fat salaries would be allowed to eat the delicious head of the *ruhi* fish and grow flabby, while the Indians languished as their cringing dependents.[132] It asserted that the pitiable economic distress of the people was mainly due to the colonial character of the British administration, where the Indians had remained unrepresented.[133] On the exclusion of the Indians from higher Government posts the Bengali press lashed the British who, while parading their racial superiority, considered their subjects inferior human beings and unworthy of any responsible posts.[134] While analysing the nature of the autocratic colonial Government it was pointed out that India was conquered at the point of bayonet, and consequently the people had lost all sorts of independence of actions in the spheres of education, intellectual pursuits and profession.[135] Without preaching rebellion the Bengal press had expressed its faith in the benevolence of the colonial Government.[136] The *Samachar Chandrika* as early as 1845 talked about the gradual impoverishment of the economy of Bengal, and predicted a famine due to the unplanned exportation of rice from Bengal to Europe.[137]

The petition to the British Parliament submitted in 1852 by the British Indian Association incorporated all the points raised by the Bengali

130. *Ibid.*
131. Radhakanta to Debendranath, dated 31 December 1851, quoted in Jogesh C. Bagal, "Pre-Mutiny Political Institutions of Calcutta: Early history of the British Indian Association", *op.cit.*
132. *Sambad Probhakar*, No. 4247, 11 February 1852, p.1.
133. *Ibid.*
134. *Sambad Probhakar*, No.3706, 1 May 1850, p.3.
135. *Sambad Purnachandrodaya*, Vol.18, 13 February 1853, p. 3, Microfilm Reel No.12, National Library, Calcutta.
136. *Sambad Purnachandrodaya*, Vol.18, 3 January 1853, p.3.
137. *Samachar Chandrika*, No.2113, 18 December 1845, p.688, Microfilm Reel No. 13A, National Library, Calcutta.

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press. There was thus an implicit popular anguish in it tamed by a belief in the benevolence of the British Government. Radhakanta also advised Debendranath to draw the petition of 1852 by procuring a copy of the Charter Act of 1833 with a view to examining "how far the local Government have acted up to those of its articles which have any relation with the welfare of this country and which of them proved beneficial and which injurious."[139] Radhakanta requested Debendranath to see that the petition was not "strongly worded".[139] C.F. Andrews thought the petition "the first political document of constructive statesmanship emanating from an Indian public body."[140] It was stressed as well that the petition was remarkable as it was drawn by those members of the British Indian Association, who had no actual administrative experience but "the document shows knowledge of the system of government, a real grasp of the needs of the people, and a wide range of interests."[141] The petition was duly presented in the House of Commons in England. It was heard in the Select Committee on Indian territories, which was addressed by G.G. Macpherson, the representative of the British Indian Association. Macpherson had all the qualities of a representative of the Association as specified by Radhakanta. He wanted the representative "throughly acquainted with the manners and customs of our country, well versed in Jurisprudence and the enactments of our Legislative Council, possessing powers of eloquence...".[142] Macpherson argued before the Select Committee that the presence of Indians in the Legislative Council "would enable the other members of the Government to ascertain what the views and feelings of the natives were upon various minute points of which they must otherwise be ignorant".[143] The British expressed doubts as to the abilities of the Indians to "the post of a legislator".[144] Macpherson told them that the Indians "should have an opportunity of showing whether they were not entitled to be trusted in the highest office of the Government".[145] Macpherson was asked whether Raja Radhakanta Deb Bahadur, Pratap Chandra Singh and Raja Kali Krishna Deb Bahadur "would represent the whole native community at large",[146] and whether "a native in Council would be looked upon with jealousy by his fellow countrymen".[147] He answered the first question in the affirmative, and the

138. Radhakanta to Debendranath, dated 13 December 1851.
139. *Ibid.*
140. C.F. Andrews and Girija Mukerji, *op.cit.*, p. 104.
141. *Ibid.*
142. Radhakanta to Debendranath, dated 13 December 1851.
143. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.VIII, No.49, 5 December 1853, p. 386.
144. *Ibid.*
145. *Ibid.*
146. *Ibid.*
147. *Ibid.*

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second in the negative.

In the summer of 1853 the Government of India Bill was introduced in the House of Commons. During the debates that followed "Mr. Hume proposed that two natives of India should be appointed - one a Hindoo and the other a Mussulman to the Legislative Council".[148] But Sir Charles Wood objected to the proposal, and said that "the most experienced witnesses concurred in the opinion that the natives of India were not yet fit to be appointed members of the Legislative Council".[149] In India the Bill was strongly criticised. No sooner did the proposed act of Parliament reached Calcutta, than a great public meeting attended by four thousand people was held, on 29 July 1853, at the Town Hall, Calcutta.[150] The meeting was chaired by Radhakanta, and Ramgopal Ghosh (1815-1869) delivered a very forceful speech "such as is not often heard at the London Tavern, and still more rarely at Exter Hall".[151] Radhakanta welcomed the speech and described Ramgopal Ghosh an asset of the Indians and a dedicated soul for their welfare.[152] The meeting expressed disappointment at the exclusion, from the proposed act, of Indians from the higher civil service, and the absence of any provision for the admission of even a single Indian into the legislative Council. It also criticised the absence of any provision for extension of public works, and denounced the one-sidedness of the Parliamentary inquiry which only emphasized the unsuitability of the Indians as legislators. The "Calcutta meeting", commented a British journal, "is in fact the evidence of a peaceful revolution in Asiatic Society which the Clives and the Hastings of the old time could no more have contemplated,... Our rulers must look to the change and provide for it, or it will provide for them."[153] However, the British Indian Association became so much critical of the Government policy of recruiting exclusively the British passing out from the Hailebury College to the civil service that it subsequently wrote the India Board a letter suggesting that certain number of the Hindus and the Muslims might be admitted into the civil service without competition "with other classes of the Queen's subjects and under a lower standard of qualification than that required from others".[154] Sir George Clerk, the Secretary to the India Board, in his reply to Radhakanta informed him that "the Board do not see any evidence that such an arrangement was within the view of the legislature, or of the gentlemen

148. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol. VIII, No.49, 5 December 1853, p. 392.
149. *Ibid.*
150. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.VIII, No.49, 5 December 1853, p.392.
151. *The Examiner*, 1 October 1853, quoted in *Ibid.*
152. Manmathanath Ghosh, *Karambir Kishorichand Mitra*, Calcutta, 1333 B.S., p. 5.
153. *The Examiner*, 1 October 1853.
154. Quoted in Amalendu De, "Radhakanta Deb (1784-1867)", *Itihas*, New Series, Vol. VIII No.1, 1380 B.S., p. 37.

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who formed rules for the examination"[156] It was also contended in a petition, in 1861, to the British Parliament that the Association did not approve of the Government policy of introducing competitive examinations for recruitment "to the valuable prizes of the Indian Civil Service,"[156] because the examinations were to be held only in London and the people of India would find it very difficult to go to England and compete. The exclusion as such of the inhabitants of India "from all official positions of eminence and consideration is felt by the country at large as a political injustice",[157] and a deprivation of "due share in the administration of the country."[158] The petitioners wanted the full implementation of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 which guaranteed impartial admission to the offices under the British Indian administration. They demanded that the people of India irrespective of their caste, creed and colour "may be enabled to compete for admission to the Indian Civil Service without quitting India, and that the competitive tests...be placed within reach of all natives of India, without violation of their national habits or religious faith or observances".[159]

The British Indian Association had also appealed, in 1861, to the British Parliament for the constitution of suitable Indian Legislative Council so as to remove its defects that were pointed out as well. They were that (i) the existing Council did not have any representative of the people, (ii) the members were exclusively official, and (iii) numerically too small to take up serious legislative activities. The state of things "has distressed and disappointed all classes of the Indian community and they need scarcely add that it loudly calls for remedy".[160] Besides these points the Association raised the question of the presence of the judges of the Calcutta Supreme Court in the Legislative Council. The petitioners wrote that the judges might speak themselves, but "they cannot constitutionally deliberate for the people".[161] It was suggested that the Legislative Council before enacting a law might call for information "coming within the sphere of their operations".[162] Radhakanta, Ramanath Tagore and other office bearers of the British Indian Association in yet another petition to the British Parliament solicited the inclusion of Indian judges and pleaders in the service of the proposed High Court of Justice in Calcutta. They also asked for the opening

155. *Ibid.*
156. *Petitions to the House of Commons: Admission of the natives into the Civil Service*, dated 4 March 1861, British Indian Association, Calcutta, April 1861.
157. *Ibid.*
158. *Ibid.*
159. *Ibid.*
160. *Ibid.*
161. *Ibid.*
162. *Ibid.*

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of judicial careers of the law graduates of the University of Calcutta.[163] On the 5th June 1861 Radhakanta and others met Charles John Earl Canning, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, and requested the withdrawal of Income-tax and subsequential increase in the Salt-tax. Radhakanta read the address which contended, among other things, that "perhaps in no other part of the British dominions is there such wide and unrestricted scope for official caprice and tyranny as in India. Unaccustomed to self government, the people are apathetic and spiritless, while the absence of any strong public opinion as a check against official oppression and abuse of power enables our officials to perpetuate many an act of official wrong and injustice with perfect impunity. Hence it is that while numberless are the complaints against the working of the Income-tax, comparatively few, indeed very few, see the light of publicity or reach the ears of the Government."[164] The Viceroy told the deputationists in reply that "to substitute a salt-tax for the Income-tax would be to relieve the rich at the expense of the poor".[165] He, therefore, did not think the substitution desirable, but the Income-tax might be amended.[166]

It was under the guidance of the British Indian Association that a public meeting was organized, on 26 August 1861, at the residence of Radhakanta to protest against some unkind remarks about the Indians made by Sir Mardaunt Lawson Wells, a judge of the Calcutta Supreme Court. The Meeting attended by the Hindus and the Muslims, the Bengalis and the north-Indians living in Calcutta drew and sent a memorial to Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, complaining against Sir Mardaunt who called the Indians "a nation of prejurers and forgers"[167] while trying the Reverend James Long for the publication of Dinabandhu Mitra's Bengali drama *Nil Darpan* in English language. The memorial pointed out that Sir M. Wells had the habit of denigrating the Indians whenever he would find opportunity to do so - even in the Legislative Council.[168] Such an important meeting was, however, presided over by Raja Kalikrishna Deb Bahadur. Radhakanta, though sick was present at the meeting. Eminent personalities like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891), Keshub Chandra

163. *Petitions to the House of Commons: Constitution of High Courts of Justice*, British Indian Association, Calcutta, 10 April 1861.
164. *Publications of the British Indian Association: From* 1854 to 1870, Vol.II, British Indian Association, Calcutta, not dated.
165. *Ibid.*
166. *Ibid.*
167. *Home Department - Public Branch, Proceedings 'B'*, September 1861, Nos. 137-38; The *Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.VIII, No.39, 26 September 1861, pp. 324-26.
168. Paragraph 19 of the Memorial quoted in *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.VIII, No.39, 26 September 1861, p. 325.

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Sen (1838-1884) and Kaliprasanna Singh (1840-1870) were also present. The speech of Radhakanta to be delivered by him was read out by Raja Kalikrishna. Radhakanta wrote that "it has hitherto been our pleasing duty to convene public meetings to give expression to our sentiments of esteem and respect towards the high functionaries of Government, to dwell upon their merits, but this day (i.e. 26 August 1861) for the first time, I believe, we have to perform a painful task which all must lament; we have to comment on the official conduct of one of the great functionaries of the State towards our countrymen, and to consult on such measures as may be deemed proper for the vindication of our national character".[169] Radhakanta thought that the task of criticising Sir Mardaunt in such a public meeting "is certainly unpleasant, but it is a duty and we feel bound to discharge it - by shrinking from it we would show our want of self respect, humilate ourselves as a nation and ignore the real interests of our country."[170] Ramanath Tagore was happy to address the people who had assembled at the meeting" to assert their political rights".[171] He told them that the emergent political consciousness was due to education given to them by the British government. Tagcre hoped that, "it should be their sincere desire that the Government should be perpetual, and should never cease to exist".172 The Times of London described the meeting as "the first symptom of an approaching national union in Bengal".173 The meeting had an immediate effect. Sir Mardaunt was harshly reprimanded by the Secretary of State for India.

Among other activities of the British Indian Association there were (i) an appeal, on 21 March 1864, to Sir Charles Wood to withdraw the Act making provision for whipping as a mode of punishment in certain cases,[174] (ii) a public meeting convened on 6 April 1857 to welcome the attempt of Sir Barnes Peacock to bring, like Bethune in 1849, the British residing in India under the jurisdiction of the *mofussil Faujdari adalats*, (iii) a petition to the British Parliament, in 1859, suggesting the introduction of the Permanent Settlement all over India, and (iv) another public meeting organised, on 7 March 1863, to present an address to Sir Charles, the Secretary of State for India. The public meeting organized on 6 April 1857 at the Town Hall, Calcutta, in connection with the attempt of Sir Barnes Peacock to bring the British within the jurisdiction of the *mofussil* courts was presided over by the

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169. *Publications of the British Indian Association: From* 1854 to 1870, Vol.II, British Indian Association, n.d.
170. *Ibid.*
171. *Ibid.*
172. *Ibid.*
173. Quoted in *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol. VIII, No.46, 21 November 1861, p.405.
174. *Publications of the British Indian Association*, Vol.II, *op.cit.*

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Vice - President of the Association, Raja Kalikrishna Deb Bahadur. Radhakanta though could not attend the meeting due to his illness sent a letter to the organisers expressing his views. He pointed out the discriminating nature of the British Indian legal system which differentiated between the British in India and the Indians before law. Radhakanta told that under the then existing British Indian legal system "the British subjects unlike the native and other European subjects, when charged with a criminal offence, are exempted from the jurisdiction of local authorities; and to process involved in criminal proceedings against such British subjects are so complicated and expensive that it was impossible to proceed against them allowing them to commit crimes with impunity".[175] He added that even if the British were found guilty in *mofussil* courts, punishments "are rendered nugatory by a writ of *certiorari* into the Supreme Court, and even a co-accused with a British subject cannot be proceeded without a reference to the Nizamat".[176] Radhakanta hoped that Sir Barnes would be praised for his boldness in presenting the Bill for withholding all the extra legal prerogatives enjoyed by the British in India, and introducing the principle of "equal justice to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects".[177] The move of Sir Barnes was also welcomed by Dr. Alexander Duff and George Thompson. (He was then present in Calcutta). They condemned the racial discrimination practised by the British and supported by the Government.[178] An anguished Radhakanta stated that there was no justification for the maintenance of "one Penal Code for the whites and another for the Hindus, one for the Christians and another for the Heathens".[179] He characterised the proposed draft Bill a "refulgent White Act" which would ensure justice with an even hand to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects".[180] The Bill of Sir Barnes had, however, to be dropped as it was opposed by the British in India.

The petition of the Association suggesting the introduction of the Permanent Settlement throughout India, and the deliberations of the public meeting convened to present an address to Sir Charles Wood were indicative of the character of the British Indian Association. While the former showed that the landed interests dominated it, the latter proved their loyalty to the British Crown. The reasons the Association presented to the British Parliament in 1859 soliciting the introduction of the Permanent Settlement all over India were significant in view of the fact that the permanently settled

175. P.N. Singh (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 20.
176. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
177. *Ibid.*
178. *Ibid.*
179. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.XII, No.15, 13, April 1857, p. 115.
180. *Ibid.*

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zamindars remained loyal to the British Government during the 'Mutiny' of 1857. The petition contended "the disturbances following the late mutiny of the Sepoy army have well established the political advantage of a body of permanently settled zamindars, over the class of superior proprietors of land, who, under various denominations, with various rights, are to be found in all the unsettled provinces".[181] It continued, "A comparison of the loyal and the disloyal throughout the late period of crisis will at least show the tendency of a Permanent Settlement to create a powerful class, who feel their interest as one with the ruling power, and who are satisfied with their position; no less than it shows that the opposite system has an exactly opposite tendency and result".[182] The meeting chaired by Radhakanta to present an address to Sir Charles Wood was held on 7 March 1863. Celebrities like Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Rajendra Lal Mitra, Kishorichand Mitra, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Raja Kalikrishna Deb Bahadur were also present at that meetings.[183] Radhakanta delivered a lecture appreciating the administrative skill of Sir Charles Wood. He started by telling his audience that he grew up along with the expansion of the British power in India. He had noticed that in the process of building a British Indian empire "there have sprung up rival interests, conflicting claims, multifarious wants, complicated relations and intricate questions of politics enmeshed in wewbs of multitudinous customs, religions and local laws; as well as evils of gigantic magnitude".[184] Radhakanta thought it was task of "administrative difficulty to wield into one homogeneous mass these jarring elements for the purpose of carrying out the objects of good government".[185] He added that Sir Charles wood proved himself to be an able administrator who avoided "graduating justice according to Ethnological and Sectarian doctrines", and had taken, on behalf of the Crown of England, paternal care of the 180 millions Indians "consigned to the care of England".[186] While evaluating the administrative qualities of Sir Charles, Ramanath Tagore spoke eloquently highlighting his achievements. He quoted the poet Pope to argue that the Indians cared for good government and not for the form of government: "For forms of Government let fools contest. Whatever is best administered is the best".[187] Kishorichand Mitra had also addressed the meeting. He told that the Indians were grateful to the British for introducing institutions like Legislative Council, Supreme and High Courts, an able judiciary, and the principle of equality before law.

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181. Quoted in C.F. Andrews and Girija Mukerji, *op.cit.*, p. 108.
182. *Ibid.*
183. *Publications of the British Indian Association*, Vol.II, op.cit., p. 1.
184. *Ibid.*
185. *Ibid.*
186. *Ibid.*
187. *Ibid.*

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It may be observed that during the lifetime of Radhakanta the British Indian Association became a platform of the landed aristocracy and the elite to give expression to their constitutional and administrative demands before the British authorities both in India and England. However critical they were of the British rule in India, it used to be preceded by their platitudes for the British. It was, however, welcomed by the Indian press in Madras and Bombay. The *Madras Athenaeum* called it the "Ancilliary Legislature of British India".[188] The *Indian Banner* of Bombay wrote; "Young India might well be proud of the British Indian Association of Calcutta", but "it is unfortunate that such an excellent body...should be left alone to fight for the cause of India generally, without aid and support from similar bodies in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies".[189] It asked, "Is it needed to be shown that `Union is strength', and `a house divided against itself must fall'". Radhakanta was associated with the Association till his death in 1867. A condolence meeting was held on 18 September 1867, which was organised by the British Indian Association to mourn his death. His various activities from the promotion of the Hindu cause to his participation in "all the public movements"[190] in order to ensure the general welfare of the people were warmly mentioned.

B. Political Ideas of Radhakanta: the message of Unity:

As the *Indian Banner* commented in 1861 that the people of India spread throughout the Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta would need concerted move to fight for the cause of India, Radhakanta on the inaugural day of the Landholders' Society had also emphasised the need of unity among the people. He told, "a single blade of straw can easily be torn, but by a bunch of it a must elephant can be fastened; therefore people will have to unite".[191] Radhakanta thought, "Fortune attendeth that lion amongst men who exerteth himself. They are weak men who declare fate the sole cause". He advised, "Subdue fate and exert human strength to the utmost of our power".[192] Radhakanta had been telling the people that they "should strain every nerve and use all of their energies in promoting the Welfare of the country".[193]

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188. Quoted in *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol. VIII, No.7, 13 February 1861, p.54.
189. Quoted in *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol. VIII, No.20, 15 May 1861, p. 157; also *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.VIII, No.21 & 22 May 1861, p. 164.
190. *Publications of the British Indian Association*, Vol.II, *op.cit.*
191. Brajendranath Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, 1830-1840, Vol.II, p. 405.
192. Quoted in *A Papid Sketch*, p.31.
193. *Ibid.*

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An Indian consciousness that became evident in the ideas of Radhakanta was the result of the British rule in India. He was overwhelmed by the emergence of various administrative, social, religious and political problems of India that surfaced during the British rule. He wrote to the Queen Victoria, "Britain has wrenched from the Moslem's hand that iron rod with which they ruled in Hindusthan, and has spread over the country her benignant and fostering sway; she has established here a mighty empire over countless myriads, an empire more glorious than that of Ancient Rome; she has chosen India to be her most favourite dependency, and though she is fully capable of maintaining her supremacy over it by the mere exercise of physical power, yet she has preferred to be guided by higher motives, and has sought to found her dominion on the affection and goodwill of her faithful subjects".[194] Radhakanta prayed to the Queen that, "a science, art, and commerce flourish under your fostering influence, and may your Majesty's Indian dependency be linked to England with unbroken ties of loyalty and affection".[195] His allegiance to the British Crown was absolute, but he never supported the view that the English would colonize India and exploit Indian trade and commerce to the benefit of England. In the twenties and early thirties of the 19th century there were some Indian supporters of colonization of India by the Europeans. Rammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore were among them. They believed that the European settlement in India would not only make the economy of India sound by investing their capital, but also help the Indians to get rid of their superstitions and idleness.[196] In England Mill, the author of the History of British India, was a supporter of colonization of India. It was argued that colonization, if allowed, would accelerate the process of civilization in India.[197] Bentinck, the Governor-General, was also thinking of colonization by "a small sober class of British with capital and skill, mainly artisans, and craftsmen".[198] There were, however, contrary opinions on colonization. Contemporary press like the *Samachar Chandrika* and the *John Bull*[199] wrote against settlement Europeans in India. The *Samachar Chandrika* felt that if colonization was allowed, it would make the Europeans the real masters of the Indian soil depriving the

194. *Home - Public*, 18 February 1859, Nos. 53-55.
195. *Ibid.*
196. Susobhan Chandra Sarkar, *Rammohun Roy on Indian Economy*, Calcutta, June 1965, pp. 84-89.
197. *Calcutta Journal*, 24 September 1820, quoted in Satyajit Das (ed.), *Selections* from the Indian Journals, Vol.I, Calcutta, 1963, pp. 346-358.
198. C.H. Philips (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. XXXVIII.
199. *John Bull*, 7 January 1828 & 23 January 1828, quoted in Benoy Ghosh (ed.), *Selections from English Periodicals of 19th century*, Vol.I: 1815-1833, pp. 17-19.

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Indians of their claim to the lands of their own country.[200] Radhakanta was happy, in 1836, to know from H.H. Wilson that "the people of England with a large disposable capital are not inclined to emigrate"[201] to India.

It may be observed that Radhakanta though was happy at the British decision not to colonize India, yet he never missed a chance to express his allegiance to the British Government. One such occasion was the 'Mutiny' in 1857. Radhakanta chaired a public meeting held on 25 May 1857 to inform the Government that the people of Calcutta were no supporters of the 'Mutiny'.[202] Cecil Beadon, the Secretary to the Government of India, thanked Radhakanta and the people for their pro-Government stand and stated that the Government had followed and would follow strict neutrality in the religious affairs of the Hindus and the Muslims.[203] Radhakanta was at the same time bold enough to draw the attention of the Government, in 1857, to the acute shortage of food in Bengal which had hit the people badly. A petition, addressed to the Lt. Governor of Bengal by Radhakanta and others, pointed out, "in consequence of the present high price of food, the Lieutenant Governor will be pleased to represent to the Legislative Council the necessity of imposing a preventive duty on the exportation of rice, dall, and mustard seed, or to suggest such other remedy as may tend to relieve the present distress of the people"[204] E.H. Lushington, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, informed the petitioners that the Lt. Governor declined to comply with the prayer as "increased difficulty would be caused by the interference of Government".[205] There was yet another instance when Radhakanta criticized the Government for its anti-people policy in the sphere of education. Radhakanta and other inhabitants of Calcutta submitted, on 25 March 1859, a petition to F.J. Halliday, the Lt. Governor of Bengal, against the proposed increase of tuition fees in the Hindu and Colutolla Schools. They wrote that any increase in the tuition fees would lead to the withdrawal of most of the students from the schools, as they were from the middle class families. Moreover, it would also "injure the efficiency of the public uncovenanted service, which is being chiefly held by the middling classes of the community, the wealthier classes not being generally candidates for Government employment."[206] Submission to the

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200. *Samachar Chandrika*, 26 December 1829, quoted in Brajendranth Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, 1818-1830, Vol.I, p. 181.
201. Radhakanta to H.H. Wilson, dated 5 March 1836.
202. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.XII, 15 June 1857, p. 188; also *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.XII, No.23, June 1857, p.180.
203. *Ibid.*
204. *The Hindu Patriot*, Vol.V, No.32, 23 July 1857, p. 239.
205. *Ibid.*
206. *General (Education) Department*, 7 April 1859, No.6.

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British Indian Government and criticism of the same ruling authorities were the characteristics of the political activities of Radhakanta. He understood it well that if the people of India would want to get their grievances rectified and wants fulfilled, they were to be unified to show the ruling Government that "Union is Power".[207] The call of unity that Radhakanta raised since the days of the foundation of the Landholders' Society proved to be the basic political slogan of the colonialized people of India.

207. *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.XII, No.15, 13 April 1857, p. 116.

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5

CONCLUSIONS

An octogenarian Radhakanta told in a meeting in 1863 that he had witnessed how the British had established their hegemony in India. He wondered how they succeeded in unifying India of many races, languages and religions.[1] The British besides subjugating India, planned to civilize her through Christianity, English language and colonization. Charles Grant, Lord Bentinck, Macaulay and Charles Trevelyan expected the British to break down Indian 'prejudice',[2] help to 'civilize'[3] India, and produce "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect".[4] Thus British India would become "a tropical America on the banks of the Ganges".[5] But the British in casting the matrix of changes in India did not consider the strong Indian opinion which, though accepted the British rule and language, did not allow India to become an America on the Ganga. In Bengal the conservative Hindus led by Radhakanta, Ram Kamal Sen and Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay opposed colonization, interference in the Hindu religious affairs; and opposed in cooperation with Debendranath Tagore proselytization. Bhabani Charan, among the compatriots of Radhakanta, was, however, an extreme Hindu conservative. He, after the dismissal of the *sati* petition in the Privy Council, spoke about mass suicide by the Hindus, revolt and boycott of the Governor-General, Bentinck. Extreme Hindu conservatism revealed as such was more or less tamed in Bengal by English education, Western ideas of politics and representative institutions.

Radhakanta, however, as a promoter of English education and Western sciences remained a critic of the British Indian Government. His intellectual mind inspired him to compile the encyclopaedic *Sabdakalpadruma*. His eagerness to be acquainted with the studies of Philology in different

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1. *Publications of the British Indian Association*, 1854-1870, Vol.II, *op.cit.*
2. John Rosselli, "Lord William Bentinck and his age", *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol.XCIV, Part II, No.179, July-December 1975, p. 78.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

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parts of the world widened his mental horizons. This was manifest in his creative and constructive activities. But he had has been slighted for his support of the *sati-daha* practice, widowhood among the Hindu women, removal of Derozio from the teaching staff of the Hindu College, headship of the *Dharma Sabha*, and anti - Rammohun Roy stance. Kishorichand Mitra told that Radhakanta lacked "that bold spirit and penetrating genius, which inspired Rammohun, and which lifted...(him) out of the mass of men, whose belief is regulated by the geography of their country, and the prejudices of their nursery".[6] Kishorichand, however, contended that foremost place was accorded to Radhakanta for his leadership of the Hindu society. He also wrote - "Though Hindu society has entered into a new phase for which new leaders are required, yet we shall be glad to see it under the pilotage of men, endowed with Radhakanta's earnestness of purpose and singleness of heart, and deep conscientiousness, but saturated by the enlightened spirit of the present age".[7] Inspite of a few kind words for Radhakanta Kishorichand thought that "Radhakanta marred his usefulness" in the society for his dogmatic views. Krishnamohan Bannerji, on the other hand, thought that Radhakanta inspite of his orthodoxy would be remembered for his pioneering role in the field of education.[8] His association with scientific experiments particularly in the field of agriculture was no less sincere than his concern for education of the Indian people. When the *Samachar Chandrika* of Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay was full of contempt for the Agricultural and Horticultural Society, Radhakanta contributed papers for the Society on cotton cultivation in India and the state of agriculture of the district of 24-Parganas. The *Samachar Chandrika* wrote that the Society had been promoting the cultivation of only onion and garlic - two of many forbidden food of the Hindus.[9] Neither Radhakanta nor Ram Kamal Sen did ever subscribe to such views of *Samachar Chandrika*. Radhakanta was also a member of the Tea Committee constituted to explore possibilities of tea cultivation in Assam.

It is worth observing that Radhakanta drew from the changing world around him without impairing his conservative belief in Hindu religion. He opposed interference in the Hindu religious practices, customs and rituals. He was critical of the Young Bengal, Rammohun Roy and the Brahmos. But Radhakanta did never practice social ostracism in respect of liberals like Dwarkanath Tagore and his son Debendranath. He felt proud of his close

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6. Kishorichand Mitra, *op.cit.*, p. 325.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, Radhakanta Deb, *op.cit.*, p. 51.
9. A.F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal*: 1818-1835, Calcutta, June 1976, pp. 26-7.

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relations with the former who went abroad for the benefit of his country. Radhakanta cooperated with Debendranath when the Christian missionaries were forcibly converting Hindu minors into Christianity. Both of them jointly found out alternative means for educating Hindu boys in schools other than those of the missionaries. They, however, maintained cordial personal relations with the leading members of the Church in Calcutta. As a matter of fact, the supporters of the missionaries were also apprehensive of the latter's proselytizing zeal. It was pointed out in 1833 that "the zeal of the Missionaries may defeat their object, and deter parents from giving their sons the benefit of a European education".[10] In fact, an Indian believed that "every Lord Sahib came to do something - Lord Ellenborough to re-conquer Afghanistan, Lord Dalhousie to annex countries...(and Lord Canning) had to convert them all".[11] However, the proselytizing zeal of Krishnamohun Bannerji caused him troubles, and he was summoned to the court of law. He was found guilty of detaining illegally Brajanath Ghosh, a minor, in his house for the purpose of converting him to Christianity. Brajanath was subsequently brought to the *Dharma Sabha* by his father, Rasmohum Ghosh for atonement. Radhakanta thought that the best procedures for atonement would be prepared by the *pandits*, which would be binding upon Brajanath.[12] The activities of Krishnamohun as a zealous Christian were typical of his age of Christianity, free thought and European learning, and those of Radhakanta were of a defensive nature *vis-a-vis* the changes encroaching upon the Hindu society and religion.

An anonymous Hindu being educated and inspired by English education, liberalism and *Brahma Sabha* wrote, "I am friendly to the *Brumha Sabha* and an enemy to its rival *Dhurma Sabha*; a subscriber of the address presented to the Governor-General for the prohibition of the abominable *Suttee* practice; a hater of superstition and idol worshipping; and a member of a reformed club; as well as a great friend of Rajah Rammohun Roy".[13] Radhakanta would like to describe such young men as "new leaders who were styled by Europeans liberals and enlightened since they do not care much for their religion or ancestors".[14] He thought that "the orthodox old parents" of the liberals were not to be annoyed, as social change would be welcome gradually in the society. Radhakanta believed that the society would accept changes "a step by step".[15] H.H. Wilson did also think likewise.

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10. *Indian Gazette*, quoted in *The Calcutta Courier*, No.95, New Series, 19 July 1833.
11. Mark Bence - Jones, *The Viceroys of India*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 26-7.
12. *The Calcutta Courier*, No.197, New Series, 14 November 1833.
13. *The Calcutta Courier*, No.101, New Series, 26 July 1833.
14. Radhakanta to Dr. Cameron, dated 13 August 1832.
15. *Ibid.*

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But the gradualism of Radhakanta was less than what the liberals were thinking of. It was, on the contrary, not even acceptable to more conservative Hindus like Bisheswar Mitra who was surprised to observe Radhakanta promoting the cause of female education. He in a letter to Radhakanta wrote that he could not understand how a person like Radhakanta could convey Bethune his consent to the education of women in a public school.[16] Mitra was shocked to see Radhakanta who suffered 'martyrdom' for the cause of Hindu religion giving permission to Hindu women to leave their house for the sake of education.[17] Radhakanta had thus occupied a unique position among his contemporaries. He, on the one hand, was criticised by the liberals, and, on the other, by his conservative Hindu supporters. As a thinking man and Hindu, Radhakanta after participating creatively in the sphere of education, politics, language and literature, and agricultural science went to Brindaban in 1864 to pursue his personal religion of Vaisnavism. On the eve of his departure for Brindaban Radhakanta, in 1863, wrote a letter to the Reverend C.H.A. Dall wherein he stated that he had throughout his life seen changes in the society of Bengal, some of which he found acceptable and some unwanted.[18]

Two young contemporaries of Radhakanta, who lived to see the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian politics, reviewed the social changes of the 19th century and appraised Radhakanta's involvement in them. One of them was Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya (1840-1932), who was a profound Sanskrit scholar and believer in Compte's Positivism. He spoke highly of Radhakanta's intellectual abilities, and wanted to place the *Sabdakalpadruma* along with the *Mahabharata* narrated by Kaliprasanna Singh.[19] Krishna Kamal, however, raised a very vital question - how far the reformers could go in their work of progress in their own colonized country? He answered that their efforts were naturally constrained by the existing colonial condition of foreign rule.[20] Dwijendranath Tagore (1840-1926), another young contemporary of Radhakanta and son of Debendranath Tagore, admitted that there was a schism between the Conservative Hindus and the Brahmos, but they were united when the British Indian Government and their European supporters attempted to curb their due share in the Government and the country.[21] Dwijendranath, like Radhakanta, believed

16. Bishweswar Mitra to Radhakanta, dated 25 June 1849, quoted in *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol. IV, No.27, 2 July 1849, p. 210.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Radhakanta to the Reverend Dall, dated 23 November 1863, quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *op.cit.*, p. 48.
19. Bipinbehari Ganguly, *Puratan Prasanga*, Calcutta, 1373 B.S., p. 50.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*

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that the Hindus who practised idolatry possessed a sense of One God, the Brahma.[22] It is worth remembering that Radhakanta did not oppose his son, Rajendranarayan, to become *Adhyaksa* of the Tattwabodhini Sabha of the Brahmos.[23] Radhakanta died, on 19 April 1867, in Brindaban. The *Somprokash* wrote that he was a conservative Hindu, but it did not prevent him from becoming an enthusiastic supporter of Female and English education.[24] In its obituary column the *Hindoo Patriot* described Radhakanta a saint. "If he had not been born in later times", the *Hindoo Patriot* contended "his learning and devotion would have undoubtedly obtained for him the honour of a saint".[25] It was mentioned as well that there was not a public movement made in Calcutta during his life time with which he was not connected.[26] The British Indian Association with which Radhakanta was associated since its inception remembered after his death his contribution to the country. It noted that Radhakanta was "the acknowledged head of the Hindoo society in Calcutta, a ripe scholar and a devoted labourer in the cause of Sanskrit literature, a warm friend to the cause of native education, and a liberal supporter of all public movements having for their object the amelioration of the political condition and the promotion of the general welfare of the people."[27] Even in his lifetime Radhakanta was honoured by his countrymen for his work in the cause of education and Sanskrit language. Some of the most prominent members of the society, on 25 November 1859, addressed him with all regards and humility. The signatories of the address were, among other persons, (1) Pratap Chandra Singh, (2) Hiralal Seal, (3) Ramanath Tagore, (4) Debendranath Tagore, (5) Jaya Krishna Mukherji, (6) Digambar Mitra, (7) Rajendralal Mitra, (8) Ramaprasad Roy, (9) Ramgopal Ghosh, (10) Peary Chand Mitra, (11) Shambhunath Pandit, (12) Krishnamohun Bannerji, (13) Hari Bhakt, the representative of the Maharaja of Nepal, (14) A. Eden, (15) Harish Chandra Mukherji, (16) Kashi Prasad Ghosh, (17) James Long, (18) Hakim Mirza Ali and several others. Thus Radhakanta had a large number of his admirers during his lifetime. His death was condoled by all the communities living in Calcutta. The condolence meeting held on 14 May 1867 was attended by a cross section of the Hindus, the Christians, the Muslims and the Parsis living in

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22. *Ibid.*
23. Nripendranath Tagore, Secretary, Tattwabodhini Sabha, to Kumar Rajendranarayan Deb, dated 10 Jyistha, 1772 *Sak.* Unpublished letter, Radhakanta Deb's Library, Shovabazar, Calcutta. (Rajendranarayan was one of the biographers of his illustrious father).
24. *Somprokash*, Vol.9, No.24, 29 April 1867, p. 373, Microfilm Reel No.14, National Library, Calcutta.
25. *The Hindu patriot*, Vol. XIV, No.16, 22 April 1867, p. 122.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Publications of the British Indian Association*: 1854-1870, Vol.II.

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Calcutta. Among the Christians present were the Reverend Dall, James Long and Krishnamohun Bannerji; the Brahmos were represented by Keshub Chandra Sen and the prominent members of the Tagore family; Muslims like Maulavi Mahmmad Ali and Fida Ali were also present, while Cowasjee Rustomji and Manockji represented the Parsi community.

Rajendralal Mitra was present in this public meeting. He very succinctly summed up Radhakanta's contribution to the society. Rajendralal told that he had been a friend of the Raja for twenty-five years. He could easily comprehend the impediments Radhakanta faced in removing the stigma attached in Calcutta in the 18th and early 19th century to any school education after the English model. Radhakanta's zeal for promoting, among his countrymen, knowledge of science had to be highlighted when attention was drawn to his stalling reformation in the sphere of Hindu religion and rituals. Rajendralal, in this connection, reminded his audience that Radhakanta did not find fault with those who dissected human body in the Medical College.[28] Radhakanta in fact, "subscribed as freely to the fund for sending native youths to England to prosecute their studies in medicine as for any orthodox understanding".[29] Rajendralal concluded his speech by quoting what Sir Lawrence Peel (Chief Justice of the Supreme Court) spoke about Radhakanta. According to Sir Lawrence Radhakanta "was a pattern of gentlemanliness which we would do well to imitate".[30]

Kishorichand Mitra criticised Rajendralal for his uncritical appreciation of Radhakanta. As a spokesman of the Young Bengal, though modified in 1867 by age and experience, Kishorichand thought the attachment of Radhakanta "to the antiquated institutions and customs and usages of his country was as devoted as his advocacy of education and of other liberal measures was zealous. But his earnestness in Hindoosm was entirely free from intolerance, and did not lead him to uncharitableness to those who were beyond its pale".[31] Montriou, a European, was also present at the condolence meeting. To him Radhakanta "was a link, and a boundary between the conservative and the progressive classes...even as the impersonation of Hindoosm, he commanded the respect of all, whether Christian, rationalist or philosopher - of all thinking men".[32] The Reverend Krishnamohun Bannerji could have been unkind towards the memory of Radhakanta who during his life-time had been uncomprosingly critical of the former's un-Hindu activities. But Krishnamohun graciously expressed his "personal

28. Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb, *op.cit.*, p. 45-6.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
30. Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb, *op.cit.*, p. 47.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*

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gratitude for the benefit" which he had derived "from his (Radhakanta's) patriotic exertions to promote education" in the country.[33] Krishnamohun was, in fact, proud when he told that the *Sabdakalpadruma* became so valuable and useful a lexicon that an inhabitant of the Madras Presidency approached him for obtaining the consent of Radhakanta to translate it into Telugu language. His devotion to Sanskrit studies became, in fact, so well known in India and abroad that he was requested by Dr. E. Roer, a German scholar, to offer monetary assistance to one poor Sanskrit scholar, Dr. L. Schntz of Westphalia. The financial condition of Dr. Schntz was so bad that he had not been able to pursue his Sanskrit studies properly, and was left with no other alternative than to sell his library, if no financial help was forthcoming. Radhakanta wrote, on 21 August 1857, to Dr. E. Roer stating that he would be happy to help Dr. Schntz with Rs.400/- which would perhaps "relieve him from the necessity of parting with the precious jewels in his thesaurus earned with his heart-blood".[34] Dr. Schntz, in a letter, acknowledged the gift of Radhakanta. Dr. Schntz wrote, on 21 October 1857, "Words cannot express the feelings by which I was overwhelmed, when I had read the letter of Dr. Roer, and the noble lines you had addressed to him on my account. If I could transport myself to India, my eye would tell you more of heartfelt gratitude than words are able. Your kind relief came in a time when it had become nearly imperatively necessary to part from my dear Sanskrit books, acquired in a period of thirty years".[35]

Referring to much spoken 'retrograde movements' of Radhakanta, Krishnamohun narrated how Bishop Corrie came into contact with Radhakanta and was impressed by his lofty religious ideas. What Krishnamohun tried to tell his audience was that had Radhakanta been an embodiment of retrogression, a respected member of the Church would not have appreciated him.

The memorial meeting also elected a Committee to find out means to perpetuate the memory of Radhakanta. The Committee consisted of the Reverend James Long, Rustomji, Rajendralal Mitra, Kaliprasanna Singh, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Ramanath tagore, Digambar Mitra, Joykrishna Mukherji, Peary Chand and Kishorichand Mitra, and a few others. Jyotindramohun Tagore was the Honorary Secretary of the Committee.[36] The Reverend Long suggested that grant of scholarship for Sanskrit studies

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33. *Ibid.*
34. Radhakanta to Dr. E. Roer, dated 21 August 1857, quoted in Ram Gopal Sanyal, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Great Men of India*, Part I, Riddhi-India Edition, Calcutta, 1980, p.53.
35. Dr. Schntz to Radhakanta, dated 21 October 1857, quoted in *Ibid.*
36. *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.XIV, No.21, 27 May 1867, p.167.

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would be the most fitting memorial to Radhakanta as "he was identified with the cause of Sanskrit literature in India".[37] Kailash Chandra Bose thought a fund could easily be collected in the memory of Radhakanta to support poor Hindu widows and orphans.[38] Subsequently, a meeting of the subscribers to the Radhakanta Memorial was held on 24 June 1869. Ramanath Tagore presided, and it was resolved that "the memorial in honour of the late Rajah Sir Radhakanta Bahadur take the following shapes:-

> 1st- A marble bust to be placed at the Town Hall.
> 2nd- A Kitkat size portrait to be hung at the British Indian Association.
> 3rd- A gold medal to be called after the name of the deceased, and to be awarded by the Senate of the Calcutta University to the best Sanskrit scholar among the successful candidates for the B.A. degree of each year."[39]

Rupees five thousand and sixtyfive were also collected for the memorial fund.[40]

The British Indian Government acknowledged the services of Radhakanta to his country. In 1835 he and Dwarkanath Tagore were appointed the first Indian Justices of the Peace for Calcutta. The Governor-General-in Council conferred on him, in 1837, the title of *Raja Bahadur* with the customary Khilluts.[41] Queen Victoria presented Radhakanta a gold medal for his *Sabdakalpadruma*. In 1842, a *Durbar* was held by Lord Auckland to celebrate the birth of Prince of Wales. Radhakanta was invited, as the spokesman of the Indian community of Calcutta, to attend the *Durbar*. The speech he delivered at that time was reprinted in 1876 when the Prince came to Calcutta. Lord Elgin did also acknowledge Radhakanta the representative of the Indian community from Calcutta.[42] Radhakanta was invested, in November 1866, by the Viceroy with the insignia of a "Knight Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India" at the `Grand Durbar' in Agra.[43]

Raja Radhakanta lived a creative life of a conservative Hindu. His Hinduism was not chauvinistic - he did not restrict his public services only for the Hindus.

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37. Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb, *op.cit.*, p.59.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.XIV, No.16, 22 April 1867, p. 122.
42. Ram Gopal Sanyal, *op.cit.*, p. 52.
43. *The Hindoo Patriot*, Vol.XIV, No.16, 22 April 1867, p. 122; Lok Nath Ghosh, *The Modern History of the Indian Chiefs, Rajas, Zamindars, & c.* Part II, Calcutta 1881, pp. 99-100.

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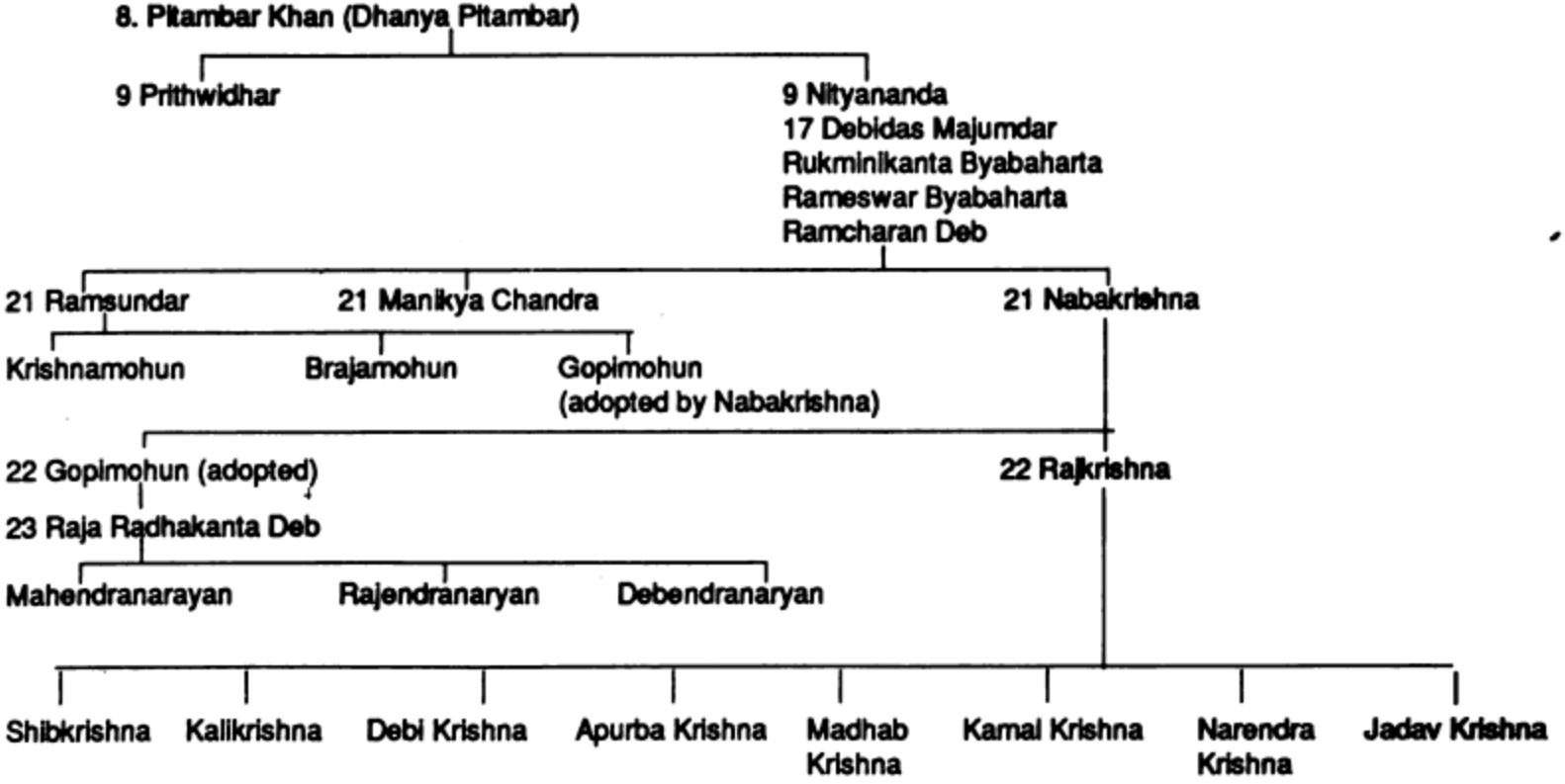
APPENDIX A

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE SHOVABAZAR RAJ FAMILY

1. Hari Deb - Krishnananda - Govinda Deb - Biswambar - Vabananda - Sridhar - his son Pitambar Khan (Dhanya Pitambar).



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APPENDIX B

PRINCIPAL HINDOO INHABITANTS OF CALCUTTA

Baboo Jugunath Purshud and his brothers, are the present representatives of the family of Moha *Raja Doolubh Ram*. He had a son named *Mookund Bullubh*, who died before him. *Jugunath Purshud* is descended from *Rajbullubh's* sister. He resides at Moorshedabad. *Kashiinath Proshud*, the second brother keeps the family house in Calcutta. *Muha Raja Raj Krishen Buhadoor* is the son and representative of Raja Nub kishen, who was Lord Clive's Dewan at the time of the elevation of Jafur Ulee Khan to the musnud of Bengal. He amassed an immense fortune on that occasion, and subsequently upon the acquisition of the Dewanee, was placed by Lord Clive in most confidential situations. For some extensive charities, he was presented by the Court of Directors with a Gold Medal. He died in 1797, leaving *Raj Kishen*, then an infant: the latter has now six sons, where of *Sheeb Krishen* is the eldest.

Baboo Gopee Mohun Deb is a Nephew of Nub Kissen, and was adopted by him at a time when he despaired of having a son born to him. By the contract made at the time of adoption, *Gopee Mohun* became entitled to share the estate equally with *Raj Krishen*, and being driven to a suit in the Supreme Court, obtained a decree to that effect.

Baboo Radhakunt Deb is the only son and heir of *Gopee Mohun*, and both are highly respectable.

Raja Ram Chunder Raee, eldest son of Raja Sookhumaee Raee, who died a few years ago, after giving 172 lacks of Rupees towards finishing the road to Jugunnath. The founder of this family was Lukhshmee Kunt Dhur, commonly called Nukoo Dhur, who made his fortune as Buneea/ banker to Coll. Clive and other Governors of that time. Sookhmaee was his daughter's son and increased his inheritance by acting as Dewan to Sir Elijah Impey. He was honored with the title of Raja in the time of Lord Minto. Raja Ramchunder shares the property with his brothers *Baboo Kishen Chunder Raee, Babbo Bydyanath Raee, Baboo Sheebchunder Raee*, and *Baboo Nursingh Raee*.

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Mulliks:

This family has long been established at Calcutta, and became wealthy some generations back. The first Mulliks of note were two brothers, Sookhdeb and Nyanchunder, whereof the latter was grandfather of the present mulliks. Nyanchunder had two sons, Gour Churun, and Nimaee Churun, commonly called neemoo mulik. Gour Chunder had four sons, but the eldest/Bisumbhur mullik was excluded from the inheritance. Kasheenath mulik, with his four brothers, represents Ramlochun, Gour Chunder's second son, their father: Jugmohun and Roop Lal, the other two, are still living. This though the elder, is not the richer branch of the family. Neemoo mulik's prodigious wealth was divided between eight sons- Baboos Ramgopal mullik, Ram Rutun mullik, Ram Tunoo mullik, Ram Kunhaee mullik, Ram mohun mullik, Heera Lal, deceased, Surpoop Chund mullik, and motee Lal. The litigation of this property in the Supreme Court is said to have cost upwards of six lack of Rupees already and there are Appeals still pending in England. Baboo Nerayun Singh, an infant son of Krishen Chunder Singh, commonly called Lala Baboo, who died at Brindaban a few years ago. He was the grandson and heir of Gunga Govind Singh, who was Dewan to the Council, and subsequently to the Board of Revenue in the time of Mr. Hastings, and thus amassed a large fortune.

Raj Narayun Raee, Taruknath Raee, and other Raees, established at Andoor, in the 24 Pergunnahs, are descendants of Dewan Ramchurun Raee, who made his fortune under Governor Vansittart, to whom he was private Dewan as well as to General Smith.

Kalee Sunkur Ghosal, son of Jynarayan Ghosal who died lately at Benares, is the present representative of Gokul Chunder Ghosal, who made the fortune of the family as Dewan to Mr. Verelst. Hence the title of the family to the Sundeep zemunidaree.

The first settlement of Chatgaon having been made by Mr. Verelst, upon its cession by Kasem Ulee Khan. Kalee sunkur lives at Khizurpoor/ Kidderpore and was the person who made the donations of land and money for a Leper asylum.

Thakoors. This is an extensive and very rich family; the principal branch of its is that derived from Durop Narayan Thakoor, who made his fortune as Dewan to Mr. Wheeler, and in the pay office of that time. He had seven sons - Rammohun Thakoor/deceased - Gopee mohun Thakoor, who died in 1816 after having long been at the head of the family to the great

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increase of its wealth; Krishna Mohun Thakoor/insane - Peearee mohun Thakoor/born dumb and now dead/; Huree Mohun Thakoor/living now in great respectability/;Ladlee mohun Thakoor - Do - and Mohunee Mohun Thakoor, who died a year or two, ago living an infant child. Gopee Mohun left six sons, whereof the eldest, Soorjkoomar Thakoor, died childless shortly after. Chunder Koomar, Kalee Koomar, Nund Koomar, Hurrookoomar, and Prusunno Koomar Thakoors now represent this branch.

Gour Churun sett, Krishen Mohun Sett, and Rajkoomar Sett are the present representatives of a family conducting a very extensive banking business in the Bara Bazar, where they have been established for several generations. Radha Krishen Bysakh, Cash Keeper of the General Treasury is of a family of shroffs/Surafs/in the Bura Bazar, connected by relationship with the Setts, and very rich.

Ram Doolal Dey, the richest man nearly in Calcutta, acquired his wealth which by Trade, and as Dewan to Messrs Fairlee & Co. He had most extensive dealings with Americans at the time when they engrossed much of the carrying trade of the Port. Ram Doolal is now old, but still carries on business.

Pran Kishen Biswas, and Jugmohun Biswas, were sons of Ram Huree Biswas, and greatly increased the large fortune made by him as Dewan to Mr. Harris, when Salt agent at Bulooah and Chittagong. Jugmohun died a few years ago, leaving an infant son, whom Pran Kishen endeavored to put off with an inadequate share of the estates; but the Supreme Court decreed lately the full half to him. Pran Kishen Biswas and his son Anundmye Biswas, are proprietors of the lands about Barrackpoor.

Raj Kishen Singh, Nubkrishen Singh, and Sree Kishen Singh, sons and heirs to the wealth of Pran Kishen Singh, formerly Cashier of the General Treasury. The founder of this family was Santeeram Singh, dewan to Mr. Middleton, and to Sir Rumbold, Chief of Patna.

Pran Kishen & Jykrishna Singh were his two sons. Bhugbutee Churun Mitur, Bhanee Churun Mitur, with other four brothers and their children, are sons of Ubhy Churun Mitur; and with Kasheenath Mitur, son of Bishnath Mitur, have inherited the wealth of Govind Ram Mitur, their great grandfather. The fortune was made as Dewan to the Zemindaree Kucharee of Calcutta, and by trade. Nubkishen Mitur and one brother, Hurlal Mitur with three brothers and Hurish Chunder Mitur, with one brother, are the grandsons by three sons of Gokul Chunder Mitur, who made a large fortune by

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provision contracts, and built a large house in the Bhag Bazar near the Chitpur Road. Gunga Narayan Sirkar, the Cash Keeper of Messrs Palmer & Co., is one of the richest natives in Calcutta, and made his fortune wholly by trade. Kishen Chunder Pal Choudhuree, one of three brothers originally in very low circumstances acquired an immense fortune in the Salt/trade. He left four sons Eeshun Chunder Pal Choudhuree, Prem Chunder Pal Choudhuree, diseased, Rutun Chunder Pal Choudhuree, & Omesh Chunder Pal Choudhuree; by these four the fortune was much increased; but their cousins have shared in it, and Buddhunath Pal Choudhuree, an only son of Kishen Chunder's youngest brother, has recently had a third of the whole estate decreed to him in the Supreme Court.

Raj Nerayun Sen, Roop Narayun Sen, three other brothers, are sons of Muthoor Mohun Sen, who made a very large fortune as a banker/ Suraf/and built a large house at Jora Bagan.

Radha Mahdub Banoorjea and Gouree Churun Banoorjea, are sons of Fakeer Chundur Banoorjea, whose father Ramsoondur Banoorjea married a sister of Ramnarayan Misrs being a Koolin Brahmin. By this and as Dewan to the Patna Opium agent, the family acquired a considerable fortune. There are several other rich families of the name of Banoorjea, all Kooleens.

Sheeb Narayan Ghosh, with two brothers, enjoys a large fortune made by Ram Lochan Ghosh their father, who was sirkar to Mrs. Hastings.

Bustom Das Mulik, brother of Sonatun Mulik, deceased, and his nephew Neeloo munee Mulik, are very wealthy respectable people. The fortune was made in trade by Ram Krishna Mulik, no relation of the Muliks above mentioned. Russik Lal Dut resides for the most part at Benares his son Oodaee Chund Dut keeps the family house in Calcutta. Rusik Lal Dut and Heeralal Dut were two sons of Modun Mohun Dut, the latter died in 1800, leaving five sons, Muner Madhub, Seeb Chunder, Sumboo Chunder, Johur Chunder, and Rajchunder Duts.

Source: *Foreign Department, Miscellaneous* Volume, No.130.

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APPENDIX C

AN ACCOUNT OF THE AGRICULTURE OF THE 24 - PERGUNNAS, -

BY BABOO RADHAKANTA DEVA

TO THE REV. W. CAREY, ACTING SECRETARY TO THE AGRICULTURE SOCIETY

Sir, - I embrace this opportunity to answer the printed letter, which you were pleased to send me some months ago, requiring thereby various information on the subject of Agriculture and Horticulture; asking your pardon first for the delay which has unavoidably taken place in transmitting this to you, as well as for my not being able to attend the meetings of the Agricultural Society at night, of which you were so good as to forward me due notice.

1st. The distinguishing character of the climate in the district of the Twenty-four Pergunnas is damp, and the cold and heat temperature. From the Bengal months of Phalgoons to Asarha, the air and water are saline, and from Sravana to Magha, not impregnated with salt. The productions of the soil are moderate.

2nd. The nature of the soil of this district is various, the surface of some places is argillaceous, and below the surface calcareous, and that of other places sandy with a stratun of muddy alluvium beneath it. It contains low swamps and fertile plains, but no hills.

3rd. The agriculturists dispose of the produce in the interior, and dealers carry the same to town. There is a great facility for conveying it from remote parts of the district, to the larger towns by water carriage, but there is a facility of land carriage too from the interior of this district to the Presidency.

4th. The rent for rice land is from 8 annas to 2 rupees per biga, for the upland from 1 1/4 to 1 3/4, and for a homestead 2 or 2 1/2 rupees, and the same place yields 3 to 4 Rs. a biga more or less, according to the richness of the ground. The customary burdens, much Methota (pole tax),

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Pavuni (a tax levied for worship at the full and new moon), Bhetee (Presents), Marocha (Presents made at weddings), Chouts (A fourth), Salamee (Presents to obtain favours), Bata (Discount) which the tenants formerly had to bear beside their rents, have been partly included in their jumma (the assessed rent) and partly abolished by the government. The security of continuing tenants in the occupation their favours, on paying their rents is the putta or lease, and Jumabundee or rent roll. New tenants hold a putta, a sunud, an amulnama as security for their occupation of the land, and execute agreements with the landlords.

5th. The general size of farms is uncertain, the tenant held that quantity of land (from 1 to 1000 bighas more or less.) which is entered in their respective names in the rent roll, and cultivate it either by themselves, or jointly, or let it to their under tenants, on certain conditions and at a certain rate, and pay the rents for the same as fixed by such rental. When land is deserted by one tenant it is let to another on a perpetual or provisional lease for the former rent, or for an additional sum agreed on by the present lessee.

6th. The crops in this district being assisted by rain water, there is very seldom any necessity for irrigation; when necessary, water is obtained from a pond, creek, or river, by means of a bucket to the seed plot, and to the lands cultivated with rice, or other articles of produce, but grass lands are not irrigated.

7th. The general arrangement of agricultural labours is as follows; rich and respectable husbandmen employ from four to ten servants or labourers from time to time, as necessary, and cultivate the lands in the proper season; poor husbandmen work themselves; the hours of their field labour are from morning till 12 O'clock, and room 3 in the after-noon till the evening, and their cattle work during those hours; the hours of their domestic labour depend upon their leisure. One biga of land in this district is calculated to be cultivated for one rupee, more or less, in a favourable season, 8 or 10 labourers, and 10 or 12 ploughs complete, are hired for a rupee per day.

8th. The kinds of live stock are cows, goats, buffalos, sheep, asses, & c. the two former are reared more commonly than the latter. In this district two oxen are generally required to each plough during their daily labour, by which about 10 or 12 bigas of land are cultivated in the season. No attention is paid to the improvement of the breed of cattle. Dairies are common in places inhabited by cowherds or milkmen. About two seers of milk are yielded on an average by a cow, some cows give half a seer of milk, and others 5 or 6 seers; this, however, is uncommon. About one quarter of a

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seer, or three and a half chuttaks of curd and cheese, one chuttack of butter, and three and half kachchas or quarters of a chuttack of ghee, are produced from a seer of milk, certain quantity of the milk is boild or crudled and made into sweetmeats with sugar for Hindoos. Cheese is made for Europeans in some parts of Bengal, but not in this district. Milk spontaneously coagulated by the heat, or by the addition of butter milk, is churned, and butter is obtained from it, which is first preserved in a vesselful of water, and then in a dry pot, the same butter when clarified, or gently boild and allowed to cool, becomes ghee. Sheep in this district are small in size, and have a small quantity of wool; a blanket maker of Calcutta says that they get no more than 4 to 5 chuttaks of wool from each sheep. The fattening of cattle for slaughter is not attended to by Hindoos. The cattle are turned loose to get their food in the fields from Magha to Asarha, and while rice is growing, i.e. from Sravuna to Pousha, they are fed at home on grass cut for them, and on rice straw, and the husks of mustard seed formed into cakes, commonly called oil cakes. Attempts are made sometimes to improve the breed of cattle, bycrossing them with males of larger breed.

9th. The usual implements used in husbandry are the langul or plough, kadalee or digging hoe, the niranee or weeding instrument, bida or rake, the mooi, or harrow, kastya, or sickle, & c. No attempts have been made to improve those in common use, or to introduce others more effectual. I do not know any man of property that would make experiments on their estates with improved implements; but I think they would be used by every body if cheep and effectual.

10th. There are three harvests in the year commonly called khunde, viz. Chita or Hurit Khunda, the spring harvest; Bhadra or Asoo Khunda, the autumnal harvest; and Pousha or Himmuntik khunda, the winter harvest. The crops of this district are chiefly rice, of which a species called aoos or properly asoo (early rice) is produced in a smaller quantity, and that named amun, in greater abundance and good. Asoo rice does not grow well in low swamps, but amun rice does; the former is sown in the month of Chitra or Vaisakha, and reaped in Sravuna, and the latter is sown in marshes in Phalgoon or Chitra, planted in Asarha, or Sravuna, and reaped in Ugruhayuna, or Pousha, as the season permite. Asoo rice produces on an average five, six, or seven maunds to the biga and amun eight or nine more or less. From two and a half or three maunds of paddy (a Malay named for unhusked rice. The Bengalle name is dhan or dhanya) one maund of chaool or rice for the table is obtained, after the husks are separately by the pedal. After reaping, asoo rice, some kinds of aumun called surpoona and oatrua, are sometimes sown in the same field, the first mentioned ripens in Ugruhayana and the last

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in Kartick. A great variety of pulse, namely teora or Khesaree, mussor, Krishna mooga, sura, musina, tuva, as well as dhunya, mohuree, ajwean, &c. are sown in the upland in Uswina or Kartika, and reaped in Mugha or Phalgoona. Urhur, is sown in Vaisakh and repeaped in Phalgoons; these articles produce on an average from a maund and half to two maunds and a half to the biga, pat is cultivated in Vaisakha and cut in Bhadra, and suna, in Asarha and Bhadra. Sugarcane is cultivated in Vaisakha and used in Magha. Kuchoo, and sweet potatoes in Vaisakha and Uswin tobacco in Uswin and Phalgons, tumerick, onions, garlick, and ginger in Vaisakha and Magha, cotton in Kartick and Jyistha and putola in Kartick and Magha. These articles are produced once a year in uplands, Baigunas, commonly called bringals, susa (circumbers) phootee, laco, or calabashes, capsicum or red pepper, radishee, &c. are produced twice a year.

Plantains, betel leaf, betelnut, coconuts, bamboos, *c. are perennial, but the stem of the plantain tree dies after yielding its fruit. The fields are kept clean from weeds with a rake and weeding instrument.

11th. Attempts are made to cultivate waste lands and to improve other grounds; but the quantity of waste land in the district is a subject of reference to the records of the Collector, who can probably give an account of it. Waste land consists chiefly of forest and pasture land, land set apart for receiving the carcases of dead cows, and some saline lands, the former has been gradually cultivated by individuals on lease obtained from the Collector. Embankments are made to prevent salt water from getting into the rice fields, and they are occasionally cut open at places to bring and carry off water; that is to say from Ugruhayuna to Asharha they are shut, and from Sravuna to Kartika open. The method usually employed in making embankments is, to collect a large quantity of mud in the dry season, and heap it up on the bank, a number of posts, mats, & c, are fixed in the uater course, and filled up with earth and rubbish, during the ebb tide, the particulars of which may be known upon inquiring of the superintendents of embankments.

12th. The state of the country is nearly as before specified. The farms which are on upland, are in some places enclosed with a mound or ditch; generally, however, the rice fields of different tenants are intermixed; but there are particular marks to distinguish them, viz. a creasing dike, a state, a bunch of fragrant grass &c. The method used to clear the land of superabundant moisture, is as mentioned in the preceding articles.

13th. A system of manuring is observed. The kind of manure

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employed near Calcutta is principally rotten cow-dung, and in other places, the earth of old mud walls, and mud dug out of ponds, and in the Western parts of the country human dung. The manure is carried about the field with baskets, and then scattered about, ploughed and mixed with the soil. About half a maund of manure, more or less, is put on a bigha.

14th. There is no land in this district employed as grass land, with the exception of a small quantity of pasture land, which is both upland and low land. No attempts are made to cut and convert grass into hay but grass cutters go from Calcutta to the interior parts to cut grass. The advantage of improving land by cultivating grass which is given green to the cattle, is unknown, unless that which produces coloo, the straw of which is used in thatching be so reckoned; all however, that is done to improve that grass is nothing more than the burning of the standing parts of the grass annually. Hay is not used in feeding any cattle except horses, in places inhabited by Christians, kine, &c. are fed with rice and straw, and graze in the field from Magha to Jisthya.

15th. There is a considerable inclination in this part of the country to cultivate gardens for use and ornament, and the productions of Europe are brought to perfection; but whether they perfect their seeds, retain their qualities, or degenerate, is best known to those who have seen and tested them both in Europe and in India. I think it possible to improve the various sorts of indigenous fruits and plants, but do not know what methods are adopted for that purpose in Europe.

16th. Attention is paid to orchards. The principal forests which are cultivated are, coco-nuts, betel nuts, phagranuts, pumplemusses, dates, mangoes, jacks, or bread fruit, rose apple, jamba or engenia, guava, pomegranate, pine apple, jujubes, a great variety of limes, and plantains, peaches, lechees, &c. The rich pay attention to the improvement of some of them by grafting or raising new varieties from seeds, and they also attempt to introduce new species from other countries. The grafting of mangoes and jujube trees is now very common here.

17th. No industry is used to raise wood in this part of the country. No new plantation of timber has been made, nor is it usual to attempt it. The chief timber trees, or species of wood (which are on the south east quarter of this district) are hintal, alli, kesoor, kripa, guran, keora, khulsee, gaoon, soondree, &c. Planks cut from kantal or jack tree are the best, and those of mangoes, jamboo, the simul or the cotton tree, &c. are inferior. The underwood is not considered valuable, it is thrown away occasionally.

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18th. The obstruction to agricultural improvement are the calamities of the seasons, as excessive rain, drought, &c. and locusts, rats, birds, &c. The remedies usually employed to avert calamities of the season are religious ceremonies, and embankments to stop inundation. Precautions are taken against devouring animals and insects; and draining, irrigating, and manuring the lands for their improvements are much practicised.

19th. The comforts and happiness of the peasantry will be promoted, if their professional business go on well, the produce of their lands be increased; and if they be not molested by their landlords, the pubic officers, and those connected with mercantile pursuits. Their health may be likewise secured by those means, and by preventing the coming in of salt water.

20th. Useful knowledge on these subjects may, I think, be obtained and diffused by communicating, corresponding, and associating with the collectors of land revenue, indigo planters, botanists, agriculturers, Zamindars, and the descendants of the late Kanoongoes, and by collecting books or treatises on these arts in Sungskrit, Persian, and English, and turning them into such vernacular languages as may be deemed requisite.

I remain with cordial wishes for the success of your benevolent and laudable exertions to improve the agriculture of India.

Sir, Your most obedient servant,

RADHA KANTA DEVA.

Calcutta, Sept. 18, 1821

Source: *Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India*, Vol.1, Calcutta, 1837, pp. 22-27.

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APPENDIX D

NATIVE MEETING AT THE TOWN HALL TO CONSIDER SUCH PORTIONS OF "THE BLACK ACT" AS REFERS TO THE EXTENSION OF THE JURISDICTION OF THE COMPANY'S CRIMINAL COURTS IN INDIA AND ALL CLASSES OF HER MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS IN INDIA.

A meeting convened by the Sheriff, for the above purpose was held in the Town Hall on the afternoon of Monday the 6th instant (i.e. 6 April 1857).

Rajah Kalee Krishna Bahadoor in the absence of Rajah Radhakanta Bahadoor, was voted to the chir. The following letter, from Rajah Radhakant Bahadoor was read to the Meeting and formed part of its proceedings:

TO BABOO RAMANATHA THAKURA, & c. &c. &c.

MY DEAR BROTHER - In reply to your kind letter of Yesterday, requesting me to take the chair at the Meeting to be held this afternoon I regret to inform you that my illhealth will not permit me to accept the honor. I embrace this opportunity however, to make the following remarks on the momentous question to be discussed on the occasion. Should you deem it worthwhile to read before the meeting you are at liberty to do so.

The object of our meeting is to consider the propriety of supporting that portion of the Draft of a Law now before the Legislative Council of India, which refers to the extension of the Criminal Jurisdiction of the mofussil courts to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects without respect of religion, race or place of birth.

The Penal Code of India with reference to the jurisdiction of the Company's Criminal Courts, as it now exists, is of a most objectionable character. It would not, I believe, be irrelevant to state here its principal features.

1st. Natives and all Europeans not British subjects are amenable to the authority of the Magistrates and Sessions Courts within whose jurisdiction they are apprehended and brought to trial. But European British subjects, for all acts of a criminal nature, are amenable only to Her Majesty's Courts and exempted from the jurisdiction of the local authorities in the

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administration of the Penal Enactments of the Government of India 53 Geo. III Cap 1555, Sec. 105 - Beng and Ben. Reg. 11 1796, Sec. 2, Cl.1 - ceded Prov. Reg. VI 1803, Sec. 19, Cl. 1 and Const. No.1296.

2nd. In the event of any charges being preferred against European British subjects which may render them liable to a Criminal prosecution in her Majesty's Courts, the process is so circuitous, dilatory, expensive, and productive of such infinite inconvenience and trouble to the prosecutors and witnesses, specially if they belong to the class of poor ryots and cultivators that they (the European British subjects) are virtually allowed to commit crimes of the most heinous nature with impunity.

3rd. There are some petty offences for which indeed a European British subject can be a Mofussil Magistrate, but convictions in such cases are removable by writ of Certorari into the Supreme Court 53, Geo, Cap 155, Sec. 205.

4th. So great is the privilege of a European British subject that if a Native happens to be a brother felon with him, the Magistrate will not be able to try him (the Native) without a reference to the Nizamat C.O. No.79 Vol.1.

5th. The Magisterial authorities have not even the power to interrogate a European British subject brought before them for any alleged offence upon matters charged against them, C.O. No.99 of vol.3rd.

Such are some of the odious features of a Law unworthy of the enlightened principles of the liberal Government of one of the most civilized nations in the world, which the proposed humane enactment intends to obliterate from the Penal Code.

It is indeed strange that the British Legislature should have delayed so long to pass a law founded upon the broadest principles of justice and humanity, but stranger still that many of the British inhabitants of India should protest against the enactment and stigmatize it by Christening it "The Black Act".

The law proposed would strike at the foundation of this inhuman principle. Far from deserving the epithet of "the Black Act" I would call it "the White Act". It should be compared to the sun in his meridian splendor, shedding the refulgent beams of justice on all classes of people equally, and dim indeed are their eyes with prejudice who cannot behold its genuine lustre. A celebrated Persian poet has aptly said "If Bais eyes cannot see in

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the day what fault is there in the rays of the sun? Desirest thou the truth? It is better that a thousand eyes were thus blind, than the Sun dark".

I here needs no argument to prove the necessity of a law dictating that justice should be administered without distinction of creed, color or caste. Our most cordial and grateful thanks are due to the Hon'ble Mr. Peacock for his having wisely and with a feeling of noble disinterestedness framed an act which proposes to render the administration of justice uniform to the British subjects of India at large. But as there are always two sides of a question, we should examine the sum total of the objections raised against the passing of the Act by the oppositionists, it is no other than the standing imperfections of the Mofussil Courts.

I admit there are many serious defects in the Constitution of these Courts, and I have all along both privately and publicly expressed this my opinion, but these should not in any wise interfere with the question at issue, which is simply this. Whether there should be one penal code for the whites, and another for the Blacks? One for the Christians and another for the Heathens? What unbiased individual would not answer in the negative? What man of common sense would not see the injustice of a saheb maltreating a poor native in the Mofussil, under the most aggravating circumstances, and going unpunished owing to the difficulties of a prosecution in the Supreme Court? Who would not call it a strange perversion of justice, that, whilst a native is amenasale to the local courts both in Civil and Criminal cases, a European British subject can be tried there only in matters of Civil controversy and would be penally liable to the jurisdiction of Her Majesty's Courts?

The defects of the Mofussil Courts should certainly be enquired into, and corrected by the Legislature, but because they are not yet reformed, it is no reason that justice should be made to assume a mild form for the conquering one, one for the conquered.

It is indeed mistaken notion of those, who suppose the amalgation of the Supreme and Sudder Courts would degrade the former and aggrandise the latter. The consolidated Tribune would inevitably be endowed with double the power that each separately possesses: local knowledge of the interior, a practical acquaintance with the manners and customs of the people and a due comprehension of Zamindary affairs and records would be obtained with prefound legal lore and judicial acumen and natural error would be corrected and uniform justice would be dealt out. Union is power holds good in this as in other cases, it will be exemplified in this as it has lately

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done on the shores of the Euxine.

Under these circumstances we would pray for the immediate promulgation of this salutary luminous and "White Act", and only suggest that the new Tribunal should be made more independent of the Government that it is intended to be made.

I beg our fellow British subject will not regard our proceedings with a hostile feeling; it is not our wish that they should in any respect suffer; all that we look for, is that justice should be dispensed with an even hand to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects.

I shall not trouble you further, but conclude with wishing you every success in your laudable exertion, and subscribe myself.

Your obedient servant,

RADHAKANTA,

Calcutta, April 6, 1857.

Source: *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol.XII, No.15, April 13, 1857, pp. 115-16.

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APPENDIX - E

DESCRIPTION BY A MUHAMMADAN OF A SATI, OR BURNING OF A WIDOW

The circumstances recently took place near Commillah. A niece of the late Rajah of Tipperah was the object in question. About four O'clock in the evening I went to the place pointed out for the sacrifice; soon after which the procession made its appearance to the sound of martial music; upon a cot (such as in general made use of by Europeans) appeared the corpse at full length, elegantly dressed in the finest muslin, having his face painted after the manner of the Rajputs, and a star made of numerous coloured threads and small thin pieces of bamboo, about the size of a thick darning needle, attached to his ear. Upon the same cot, in a recling posture, was his wife, most superably dressed in muslin and fine clothes; her hair was loose and encircled in various wreaths of yellow flowers, having rings of pure gold in her ear and nose, and upon her wrists and ancles were rings of pure silver. Numerous attempts were made by her relations, and by myself, to dissuade her from the rash step she was about to make, but all to no purpose. At length the night fast approaching, various culis were employed to dig a hole in the ground, which was made in the form of a cross, during the making of which she repeatedly made enquiries as to its exactness. Having satisfied herself upon this subject, she then observed that there was not a sufficiency of wood to keep up a large fire till day-light, and then directed her confessor (a Brahman) to get for her seven Supari trees, which being brought, she then expressed a wish to have the ceremony commenced upon - she then descended from the cot, placed a number of Cowries in a cloth, which she distributed only to her own cast, repeating a short sentence from the Vedas, and receiving for answer the words Ram, Hari, Ram, Krishno, Hori. She was then bathed, and walked round the funeral pile (which was about six feet long and four broad) three times, and was again bathed; she then distributed her wearing apparel, but retained all her ornaments; again walked four times (in all seven) round the pile, and was again bathed; she then advanced to the pile and spoke to her female relations, recommending their following her example (as I was afterwards told) desired a Brahmin to give her a black pigeon, and resolutely stepped upon the pile. The Corpse of her deceased husband was then brought and placed close to her, which she clasped in her arms and kissed; then desired the friends to make no

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delay, and retired to rest - to rest, I may safely say, as upon feeling her pulse before the fire was communicated, I could not perceive the least motion in it. Fire was then communicated to the pile amidst loud shouts from the spectators, the music playing the whole time, and although the flames was very bright, yet for a time it was completely hidden from the sight by showers of short bamboos which were thrown into it by the by-standards, both Hindus and Musalmans. The Sati was a most beautiful woman, very fair, and having a countenance somewhat resembling the Chinese. Suffice it to say, that I retired fulfilled with sensations of a nature not the most available. The sight was altogether in the words of the poet: "Sublimely grand and awfully terrific".

MIRZA KAZEEM

Tipperah, 30th Dec. 1816.

Source: *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies*, Vol.IV, July - December 1817, London, 1817, *The Asiatic Journal for August* 1817, p. 136.

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APPENDIX - F

AN ORTHODOX HINDU ATTACKS RAJA RADHAKANTA DEB FOR SUPPORTING WOMEN'S EDUCATION

To the editor of the Hindu Intelligencer,

Sir, The publication of several letters in your paper, addressed to different individuals, emboldens me to send you the following letter, which I hope you will also oblige me by giving it an early insertion:- TO MAHA RAJAH RADHAKANT DEB BAHADOOR,

Sir, - There are several *Dalopotees* in Calcutta, but I have selected you as the first person to address on so important a subject as the education of our Females. Your well-known reputation as a man of learning, added to which your martyrdom of the cause of religion, has raised your character so high in the estimation of your countrymen, that they look upon you as one, who would at all times, and at all hazard, be foremost to stand to fight for the cause of the country. Your countrymen, Sir, were elated with joy when they heard, that you had been invited by the Honorable Mr. Bethune to confer at his house, regarding the utility of giving public education to the females of this country, thinking that nothing in the world, would induce you to shrink from expressing your sentiments freely, even if in so doing, you might incur the displeasure of that honorable gentleman; but, Sir, they were sadly disappointed in their joy, when they learnt. that instead of offering your free opinion, you were constrained to compromise your principle, by giving your tacit consent to the system, which he (Mr. Bethune) proposes to introduce in his school, lately established for the education of the Hindu females. This system, if I rightly understood, is to introduce English works on Ethnics and Science translated in our own language. To a superficial observer this will appear as quite unobjectionable, but if you will calmly reflect, you will find it is fraught with evils, which if we once permit to creep into our society, will unhinge the doors of our temples, and destroy every God, and Goddess we have to worship. It is something very mysterious for us to form an accurate

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idea, as to your motive, which led you to acquiesce in Mr. Bethune's proposition. Is it, that you were afraid of being hurled down by him from your high station in life, in consequence of his having connection with the Government, which might enable him to influence the Deputy Governor to strike off your name from the Government House List? It it is not this, then what it is really, we cannot comprehend. In perusing Mr. Bethune's long address to his followers in a meeting held at the garden house of Baboo, Duckhinarunjun Mookerjee on the 23 ultimo, I observe the honorable gentleman, in order to support his own case, very triumphantly introduces a pamphlet, written by you some 20 years ago, on the propriety of female education. Now, without questioning, as to the fact, whether the pamphlet was written by you, I would request you would be good enough to state openly, and candidly, if you ever meant, when adverting to Female improvements, their education should be given from English books, and on English principles. Knowing as I do, your orthodoxical habits and opinion, I am sure, you have not sanctioned any thing of the kind; but if any person should now give a different construction to your pamphlet, it must be delude the poor natives to an undertaking, which, if properly explained, would hardly meet with sufficient encouragement from them. Now, Sir, you say in one part of your pamphlet, that if the Females are not educated, they will be prone to evils, and become occupied with loose thoughts. May I take the liberty to ask, whether this was your sincere belief, or that you wrote so mere from the impulse of the moment, than any desire to stigmatize the character of the Females of your country? Can you positively say, that without education, the Hindu Females have no means of acquiring a sound knowledge of morality? Do not the good examples of their fathers and mothers teach them to become virtuous women? Has not the idea, which they gather of our Shastras from traditions and oral instructions been sufficient to make them the most amiable and most faithful to their husbands? Now, if these facts are at all clear to you, how could you with any propriety bring such a sweeping charge against a nation, whose character and reputation are identical with yours? As fellow citizens, Sir, we have a right to demand explanation from you, and that explanation, I trust, will remove the stigma, which you have so inadvertently and unintentionally cast upon our national character. You, Sir, as I have before stated, are the very picture and model of Hindu morality, to your hands then, we must look for justice. If you have any regard for your country, I trust, you will lose no time to publish a counter - statement of your opinion regarding the morality of the Hindu females, and thus save their character from the aspersion, that Mr. Bethune's address might create in the minds of the civilized world. In conclusion, permit me to assure you, that if you do not publish a counter-statement as above, I am afraid, many composing your

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Dhul will be under the necessity of enlisting themselves to that of Baboo Promothnauth Deb - a staunch advocate to preserve Hinduism and Hindu Females, not to mention, how you will stand in the estimation of your countrymen.

I remain, Sir, your Obdt. Servant,

BISSESSUR MITTRE

25th June, 1849

Source: *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Vol. IV, Calcutta, Monday, July 2, 1849, No.27.

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APPENDIX - G

ESTABLISHMENT OF HINDU DHARMA RAKSHAKA SABHA IN 1855

Hindu Orthodox Association

At a Meeting of the Native Community held this day afternoon, the 25th November 1855, at the house of Rajah Radhakant Behadur at Sobhabazar, there were present Rajahs Radhakant Behadur, Kallekishen Behadur, Apurvakishen Behadur, Komalkishen Behadur, Narenderkishen Behadur, Cowar Rajkishen Roy, Baboos, Buddenchunder Roy, Goberdhone Doss, Sibkissen Banerjee, Abhoychurn Banerjee, Khelnutchunder Ghose, Greenderchunder Ghose, Woomeshchunder Dutt, Kasiprasad Ghose, Abinashchunder Gungoly, Sibchunder Goho, Nilcomul Gungoly, Janmejoy Mitter, Lallchund Mitter, Kallachund Bose, Hurroprosad Ghose, Hurronauth Mookerjea, Kedarnauth Paulit, Muddunmohun Chatterjee, Ramdhone Ghose,&c.&c. On the motion of Rajah Kallekishen Behadur seconded by Baboo Abinashchunder Gungoly, Rajah Radhakant Behadur was called to the chair and addressed the meeting in the vernacular in reference to the Bill for the removal of legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows, which had been read for the first time before the Legislative Council of India on Saturday the 17th November 1855. He said that the British Government had pledged themselves not to interfere with the religion or the customs and usages of the natives of this country, but when they had passed the law securing the right of inheritance to native converts, and when they were about to legalize the marriage of Hindu widows, it was evident that they were going out of the limits of legislation which they had prescribed for themselves. About eighteen years ago the question of widow marriage was agitated by the Law Commissioners, and a reference was made to the Sudder Courts at the several Presidencies for their opinions on the subject. These courts very properly objected to the measure on the ground that it would be a direct encroachment upon and at once disorganize the whole system of the Hindu law of inheritance. The state of Hindu society was the same in 1855 as it had been in the year 1837 when the Law Commission took up the matter; it had undergone no change, which would justify interference.

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Yet the Legislative Council were about to promulgate a law removing the legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows; as if such a law were actually called for by present circumstances. It is, therefore, highly necessary that a petition should be presented to the Legislative Council and every other lawful means be used with a view to prevent any such uncalled for and injurious interference with our religious and social customs; and for this purpose the Chairman suggested the formation of a society to be called the Hindu Dhurma Rakshaka Subha or the Hindu Orthodox Association and the collection of funds necessary to carry out the objects of that society.

1. Proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Rajah Kalleekishen Behadur that a Society be established to be called the Hindu Dharma Rakshaka Subha or the Hindu Orthodox Association. - Carried *Nem Con.*

2. Proposed by Rajah Apurvakishen Behadur and seconded by Baboo Abhoychurn Banerjia that a petition be presented to the Legislative Council of India praying that the bill for legalizing the remarriage of Hindu females be not passed into law, and that if the petition be not successful, suitable representations be made to the authorities in England. - Carried *Nem Con.*

3. Proposed by Baboo Hurroprasad Ghose and seconded by Baboo Hurronauth Mookerjea that a Committee be formed consisting of the following Gentlemen *viz* - Rajah Apurvakishen, Rajah Narendrakishen, Rajah Komulkishen, Koomar Rajkishen Roy, Baboos Sibkishen Banerjea, Ramnarain Dutt, Khelutchunder Ghose, Gopaulloll Tagore, Hurrocoomar Tagore, Gobverdhone Doss, Greender Chunder Ghose, Buddunchunder Roy, Kasiprasad ghose, Muddunmohun Chatterjea. Janmejoy Mitter, Nilcomul Gungoly, Kallachaund Bose, Abinashchunder Gungoly, Lollchaund Mitter, Ramdhone Ghose, and Sibchunder Goho.

4. Proposed by Rajah Narenderkishna, and seconded by Baboo Abinashchunder Gungoly that Baboo Kasiprasad Ghosh be requested to act as Secretary and Treasurer to the Association and also that subscriptions be receiveds by him and disbursements made at his discretion. - Carried *Nem Con.*

The Meeting broke up with the usual vote of thanks to the Chairman.

(Sd.) RAJAH RADHAKANT BEHADUR

Chairman

Source: *The Hindu Intelligencer*, Calcutta, Monday, December 3, 1855, Vol.X, No.49.

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INDEX

A. Eden 125
Aesop's Fables 31
Agency Houses 48
Agricultural and Horticultural Society 1, 36-37, 104, 122
Alexander Duff 79, 80, 83, 84, 115
Aligarh Scientific Society 35
altamghah 11, 95
ashauch 33
Ashutosh Deb 81, 107
Asiatic Society 30, 66
Atmiya Sabha 26, 30
August Wilhelm 34
Azimuddin 62

badshahi lakhiraj 96, 99
badshahi-minhaidar 95
Barodakanta Roy 91
Baze Zamin Daftar 96
Bengal British India Society 78, 104, 105, 108
Bengal Christian School Society 54
Bentinck 17, 38, 64, 65, 86, 88-89, 118, 121
Bethune 53, 56, 83, 57, 114, 124
Bethune's School for Girls 2, 53
Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyaya 27, 31, 32, 56, 68, 80, 85-86, 121, 122
Bhabani Charan Mitra 91
bhatottar 95
Bholanath Sen 27
Bisheswar Mitra 124
Bishop Middleton 47
Brahmo Sabha 26, 56, 71, 123
Brahmo Samaj 27
Brahmos 122
brahmottara 13, 95
Brajanath Ghosh 123
Brindaban 2, 28, 124, 125
British Foreign School Society 54
British India Society 94
British Indian Association 3, 28, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 117, 125, 128

C.E. Trevelyan 24
C.F. Andrews 110
C.H.A. Dall 69, 85, 124, 126
Calcutta Baptists 53
Calcutta Female School 53
Calcutta Madrassa 62
Calcutta Medical College 58
Calcutta School Book Society 2, 23, 32, 40, 41, 42, 44, 47
Calcutta School Society 2, 23, 40, 41, 42, 44, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 63, 72, 74
Captain Francis Irvene 45, 47, 85
Cartier 11
Cecil Beadon 119
chakran 95
Charles Grant 23, 121
Charles John Earl Canning 113
Charles Trevelyan 121
Charter Act of 1813 23, 40
Charter Act of 1833 106, 108, 110
Chaturbhuj 5
Christian Landholders' Society 82
Clive 8, 10, 11, 21, 111
Committee of Managers 41, 47, 48, 51
Conservative Hindus 27, 28, 31, 44, 68, 70, 74, 79, 80-81, 85, 87, 88, 121, 124, 128
Cornwallis 68
Council of Education 83
Cowasjee Rustomji 126

D.L. Richardson 85
Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee 26, 104, 107
Dalhousie 84, 103

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Daniel O'Connell 94
Dasarathi 16
David Hare 37, 44, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 55, 63, 70, 73, 78-79, 91
Debendranath Tagore 2, 28, 36, 78, 80, 85, 106, 107, 121-22, 124, 125
Debidas Majumdar 5
Derozians 18, 19, 27
Derozio 26, 28, 63, 71, 73, 79, 122
devottara 13, 95
Dewani 10, 20, 95
Dharma Sabha 1, 3, 19, 28, 56, 68, 78, 80-81, 86, 94, 122, 123
Dig Darshan 33
Digambar Mitra 107, 125, 127
Dinabandhu Mitra 113
Dr. N. Walich 37
Dwarkanath Tagore 27, 31, 52, 63, 74, 94, 103, 118, 122, 128
Dwijendranath Tagore 124

E. Roer 127
E.S. Montagu 42
Edward Hyde East 38, 85
Edward Ryan 48, 50, 52, 74
Elliot 97, 99
Emperor Shah Alam 13
English East India Company 4, 6, 9, 26, 15, 19, 39
Enquirer 61

F.J. Halliday 97, 119
Falta 7
Faujdar of Bhagalpur 11
Female Central School 55
Female Juvenile Society 53, 54, 55, 56, 57
Fida Ali 126
Fort William 5, 6, 7
Fort William College 32
Francis Irvene 42
Friedrick Max Muller 67
Friend of India 65

G.A. Bushby 81
Ganga Gobinda Singh 10, 13, 15
Gauriya Samaj 30, 31
General Committee of Public Instruction 23, 59, 60, 61, 62, 79
George Thompson 94, 103, 104, 105, 115
ghatakas 4
Gibbon 70
Girish Chandra Ghosh 127
Gobindapur 5, 6
Gocul Chandra Ghosal 15
Gopimohun Deb 17-19, 37, 61, 68
Gourmohun Vidyalankar 31, 42, 55
Gurucharan Singha 83
gurus 42, 44, 47
Gyannuweshun 56

H. Mackenzie 50
H.H. Wilson 24, 25, 35, 62, 64, 67, 76, 82, 85, 119, 123
H.T. Prinsep 99, 101
Hakim Mirza Ali 125
Haladhar Mallik 56
Hara Kumar Tagore 107
Hari Bhakt 125
Harish Chandra Mukherji 125
Hastings 111
Henry L.V. Derozio 25
Hindoo astronomy 18
Hindu College 24, 25, 28, 42, 51, 52, 53, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 71, 73, 77, 79, 83, 84, 91, 122
Hindu collegians 33
Hindu Dharma Rakshaka Sabha 2, 3, 76, 77
Hindu Hitarthi 80
Hindu Intelligencer 65
Hindu Metropolitan College 84
Hiralal Seal 125
Honoria Lawrence 25
hukkami 96
hukkami-minhaidar 95

inam land 95
Income-tax 113
Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar 77, 114, 116

J.H. Harington 41, 45, 61, 62
J.T. Metcalfe 24
James Grant 96
James Long 3, 113, 125-27
James Mill 23
Jaykrishna Mukherji 103, 107, 125, 127
Jean Baptiste 10
John Crawford 94
Joshua Marshman 33
Jyotindramohun Tagore 127

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Kailash Chandra Basu 83, 128
Kalikata Kamalalaya 32
Kalikrishna Deb 107
Kalinath Munshi 27
Kalinath Roy Chaudhury 91
Kaliprasanna Singh 114, 127
Kanta Babu 10
Kashi Prasad Ghosh 125
Kashmiri Mal 10
Kasi Prasad Ghosh 76-77
Kasimbazar 7
Keshub Chandra Sen 114, 126
Kharidamuaffi 95
Kishorichand Mitra 3, 116, 117, 122, 126, 127
Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya 124
Krishnamohun Bannerjee 2, 26-28, 72-74, 122-23, 125-26

L. Schntz 127
Lady Amherst 55
lakhiraj 90, 92, 95, 98, 101, 102
lakhirajdars 98, 99, 101, 102, 103
Landholders' Society 2, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 98, 101, 102, 103, 105, 106, 108, 117, 120
Laxminaryan Mukhopadhyaya 91
Lenz 35
Lex Loci Act 2, 81-82, 109
Lord Auckland 94, 128
Lord Elgin 128
Lord Ellenborough 87

Macaulay 57, 64, 65, 121
madad-mash 95
Maharaja Kamal Krishna Deb 16
Maharaja Krishna Chandra 13
Maharaja Tej Chand 15
mahattran 95
Manikya Chandra 6
Manockji 126
Maratha incursions 6
Maratha- Peshwa 1
Mardaunt Lawson Wells 113
Marquis of Hastings (Earl of Moira) 41, 98
Maulavi Mahmmad Ali 126
Max Muller 33, 34
Medical College 74, 126
Mir Jafar 8, 10, 20
Mir Kasim 20, 21
Miss Mary Anne Cook 54
mittaki 95
Montriou 126
Motilal Seal 56, 80, 85
Mrityunjoy Vidyalankar 32
Munshi Muhammad Amir 91
Muragacha 5
Murshidabad 5
muslin 11

Nabababubilas 32
Nababibibilas 32
Nabakrishna 1, 4-18
Naku Dhar 7
National Association 106, 107
navasak 57
Nawab Ali Vardi Khan 5, 14
Nityananda 5

Papineau 94
pathsalas 2, 40, 41, 42, 47-50, 52, 55
Patitoddhar Sabha 82
pauttalik 70
Peary Chand Mitra 125, 127
Permanent Settlement 93, 96, 102, 104, 115, 116
Pitambar Khan 5
Planters' Association 93
Pramathanath Deb 56
Prasanna Kumar Tagore 2, 27, 31, 52, 73, 79, 83, 90, 106, 116
Pratap Chandra Singh 110, 125
prayaschitta 33

Rabindranath 36
Radhakanta 1, 2, 4, 5, 12, 15, 18-19, 27-28, 30-38, 40-42, 44, 47-51, 53, 54-59, 61, 63-64, 66-70, 72, 74-76, 78-85, 90-92, 94, 107, 109, 110-11, 113-21, 123
Radhamadhab Bandopadhyaya 40, 52, 85
Raja Barodakanta 91
Raja Jayakrishna Dass 35
Raja Joy Singh 18
Raja Kali Krishna Deb 85, 90-91, 110, 114-16
Raja Pratap Chandra Singh 107
Raja Rammohun Roy 24, 25, 70
Raja Satya Charan Ghosal 107
Rajendra Lal Mitra 74, 116, 125-27

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Rajendranarayan 125
Rajkrishna 17
Rajkrishna Deb 15
Rajkrishna Mukherji 103
Ram Kamal Sen 2, 27, 31, 33, 37, 38, 52, 61, 64, 68, 85, 91, 93, 121, 122
Ramacharan Deb 5-6
Ramanath Tagore 85, 107, 113, 116, 125, 127, 128
Ramaprasad Roy 85, 125
Ramdulal De 31
Ramgopal Ghosh 2, 26, 28, 80, 107, 111, 125
Rammohun Roy 18, 19, 26, 27, 28, 30, 70-71, 89, 118, 122
Ramnidhi Gupta 16
Ramsundar 6
Rasamay Datta 31, 40, 52
Rasik Krishna Mallik 26, 28, 73-74
Reverand Henry Townley 47
Reverand Thomas Thomason 47
Reverend J. Makai 80
Reverend Procter 79
Reza Khan 1, 10, 11, 13
Richard Becher 21
Royal Asiatic Society of Britain 34
Rustomji 127

Sabdakalpadruma 1, 19, 33, 34, 35, 121, 124, 127, 128
Salt-tax 113
Sanskrit College 64
Sati 2, 28, 67, 68, 75, 85, 86, 87, 89, 121, 122
Satya Charan Ghosal 91
Schlegal 34
Seal's Free College 80, 84
Sezawal 14
Shambhunath Pandit 125
Shovabazar Raj 1, 4, 6, 17, 18, 19, 92
Sir Barnes Peacock 114, 115
Sir Charles Wood 111, 113, 114, 116
Sir Edward Hyde East 41, 45
Sir Lawrence Peel 126
Siraj-ud-daula 7
Sivdas 5
Sri Krishna Singh 52
Srihari Deb 5
Srinath 5
Strisiksa Vidhayaka 55-56
Sutanati 6, 12

T.H. Maddock 88
Tajuddin 7
Tarachand Chakraborty 31
Tarinicharan Mitra 31
Taylor 97
Tea Committee 38, 122
Theodore Dickens 91
Thomason 61
Trevelyan 64

Umesh Chandra Sarkar 80, 84
Unitarian Committee 26

Vaisnava Hindu 28
Verelst 98
Vernacular Translation Society 38
Vidyadhar Deb 5
vritti 95

W. Adam 48, 53, 73
W. Fraser 39
W.H. Mill 61
W.H. Pearce 40, 41, 42, 48, 50, 53, 54
W.W. Bird 101
Warren Hastings 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 96
widow-remarriage 2, 28, 76, 78
Wiliam Carey 37
William Adam 40
William Butterworth Bayley 45
William Carey 33
William Jones 30
William Taylor 97
William Ward 40, 54

Young Bengal 2, 19, 26, 27, 28, 56, 70, 71, 75, 122, 126

Zehur Ali 62

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